

FIGHTING DAREDEVILS OF TODAY'S WAR

AIR WAR

10

SUMMER
ISSUE

A THRILLING
PUBLICATION

FEATURING
**MASK
OF GLORY**

An Exciting Novel of
Fighting Courage
By WILLIAM

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our plans to help fellows like me get ahead.

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UNITED
STATES
WAR
BONDS
AND
STAMPS

FIGHTING MONSTERS OF TODAY'S WAR

AIR WAR

10

MAKING OF GLORY

Behind the scenes of military aviation, the men and women who make the difference between life and death.

CAPTAIN BARBARA CHASE PACIFYING TERROR

A woman's story of courage and sacrifice in the skies.

WHEN and HOW to Use Your FLASHLIGHT in a BLACKOUT

THESE INSTRUCTIONS Reviewed and Passed
by the OFFICE OF CIVILIAN DEFENSE



1 EVERY HOME should have one or more flashlights! But before buying *new* ones, inspect and repair your *old* ones. They may need only a new bulb, new lens or fresh batteries.



2 KEEP YOUR FLASHLIGHT in a convenient, accessible place—and *always* in its place. When using it *INDOORS*, never point it toward unshielded windows, skylights or open doors.



3 DO NOT USE an *unshielded* flashlight *OUTDOORS* in a blackout except when absolutely necessary. Keep the beam level or downward—never point it even *slightly* upward. And never point it toward highly reflective surfaces.



DIAGRAM 1



DIAGRAM 2

HOW TO SHIELD your flashlight for outdoors use: Insert two thicknesses of news-
paper, held in place by string, as
shown in Diagrams 1 and 2. Insert
discs of paper and insert
Deep red paper may
(or red). CAUTION: The
approved any so-
now, the instruc-
ions are issued.

batteries, and
in case of

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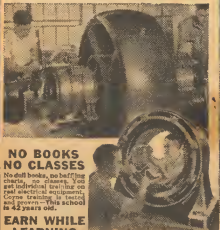
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AIR WAR

VOL. 3, NO. 3

"Every Story Brand New"

SUMMER, 1942

*Coming In The
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MASON**

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MORGAN**

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A Complete Sky Action Novel

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By **WILLIAM O'SULLIVAN**

Skid Carr, Crop-Dusting Pilot from the U. S. A.,
Finds Himself in the Middle of a Nazi Spy Plot
that It Takes a Slue of Bombers and Fighters
to Break Up!

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A COMPLETE NOVELET

CAPTAIN DANGER OVER

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The Great Yank Fighter, in the Uniform of His Own
Country, Makes the Japs Say "So Velly Sorry!"

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Way to the Jaws of Death.

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Until the Decision Was Taken Out of His Hands!

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A Live-Wire Department for Readers.

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(NAME AND ADDRESS
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A Department Written and Illustrated by JOE ARCHIBALD

GREETINGS, gang. We are glad to see that your pans are all bright and smiling at this meeting. Well, we have got plenty to smile about as since we went into the last huddle in this Operations Office Tokio has been bombed and Hitler made a speech to his stooges which indicated that the master race was slipping.

Things are sure looking up for the United Nations and it is a safe bet that our production in this country is going to eclipse the Jig output inside of another year.

R.A.F. bombers are getting deeper into Adolph's occupied territory and have bombed the Skoda plant in Czecho-Slovakia. American soldiers are fraternizing with the medicine men in New Caledonia, and the Viper of Vichy, Pierre Laval, is protesting.

The tide has started to go out for Hitler and in about a year, the paper hanger will be left on the beach to dry like a stranded horseshoe crab.

We're Full of Morale

We feel full of morale at this time. We met Herman Beep on the way over and Herman seemed to have something wrong with him.

We asked him why he walked with one foot in the gutter and Herman said it just looked like he was walking that way.

"You can be too patriotic," Herman complained. "I just come from a first-aid class and they put a traction splint on my left leg which was broken theoretic. Two dames pulled my leg until it was three inches longer than the other."

We asked Herman why he looked so pale too and Herman said that happened at the same time as his leg.

"I had a nose bleed which I am subject to and a doll says you always put a tourniquet just below the wound which is bleedin'. Well, they put it around my neck and I was only saved by an eyelash. I don't git this blood bank stuff neither, pal. I put a pint of blood in one bank in Canarsie and only a couple of hours ago I went to draw some out as I needed it bad.

They told me I couldn't. I will write to the Federal reserves."

Herman is trying to get a patent out for a new invention. It does away with parachutes. Herman claims parachutes get caught in the plane sometime and a lot of them do not open.

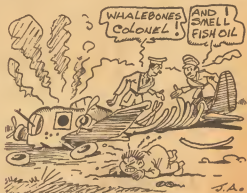
The pilots wear a suit that can be blown up as they go down and when they descend to about five thousand, they are human blimps that float in the air. They asked Herman in Washington how they would land and Herman told them an ice pick and a bicycle pump went with every Beep Blimpsuit.

"You just jab the pick in the valve," Herman said. "The air escapes gradual."

An F.B.I. man was asking us where Herman was this morning.

Jap Jonahs

The little sawed-off Nippos have been accused of lacking originality, but a certain Shinto M.D. named Seiichi Ishisewa



has sent Jappo fishermen out to hunt whales on a big scale.

The Jap croaker claims he has developed an aircraft lubricant out of whale oil. We have a hunch the Jap has overlooked a bet regarding the Moby Dicks. Why waste any of the whole? Peel off the blubber

(Continued on page 8)



Revealed at Last!

We Ferreted Out

The SECRETS of ANCIENT FORBIDDEN MYSTERIES

AND REVEAL THIS AMAZING INFORMATION NOW FOR THE FIRST TIME

THE VOW OF SILENCE HAS BEEN BROKEN!

"The 7 Keys to Power alleges to teach," the author says, "All the Mysteries of Life from the Cradle to the Grave—and Beyond. It claims to tell you the particular day and hour to do anything you desire, whether it be in the light of the moon, sun, or in total darkness."

He claims, "The power to get what you want revealed at last, for the first time since the dawn of creation. The very same power which the ancient Chaldeans, Cuthic, Egyptians, Babylonians and Sumerians used is at our disposal today."

He says, "Follow the simple directions, and you can do anything you desire. No one can tell how these Master Forces are used without knowing about this book, but with it you can mold anyone to your will."

From this book, he says, "You can learn the arts of an old Science as practiced by the Ancient Orders. Their marvels

were almost beyond belief. You, too, can learn to do them all with the instructions written in this Book," Lewis de Claremont claims. "It would be a shame if these things could all be yours and you failed to grasp them."

He claims, "It is every man's birthright to have these things of life: MONEY! GOOD HEALTH! HAPPINESS! If you lack any of these, then this book has an important message for you. No matter what you need, there exists a spiritual power which is abundantly able to bring you whatever things you need."

OVERCOME ALL ENEMIES, OBSTACLES & HIDDEN FEARS

ARE YOU CROSSED IN ANY WAY?

The Seven Keys to Power, Lewis de Claremont says, shows you how to remove and cast it back.

The Book Purports to Tell You How to—

Gain affection and admiration.
Adjust disputes.
Obtain property.
Make people do your bidding.
Make any person respect you.
Make people bring back stolen goods.
Make anyone lucky in any games.

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Get any job you want.
Understand mental telepathy.
Help people in trouble.
Banish all misery.
Gain the mastery of all things.
Restore your ambition.
Observe words according to ancient, holy methods.

THE ONLY TRUE BOOK OF SUPREME MASTERSHIP!

This is the Power, he says, from which the old masters gained their knowledge and from which they sold limitless portions to certain favored Kings and others at high prices, but never to be revealed under a vow, the violation of which entailed severe punishment.

THE VOW HAS NOW BEEN BROKEN

This book, he claims, shows you the secrets of old which when properly applied make you able to control the will of all without their knowing it. If you have a problem and you wish to solve it, he says, don't hesitate. Advertisements cannot describe nor do this wonderful book justice. You must read it and digest its meaning to really appreciate its worth.

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PROP WASH

(Continued from page 6)

and the flesh and you come to a skeleton that ought to make a fuselage for a new Jap bomber. Save the big flipper and the tail fins.

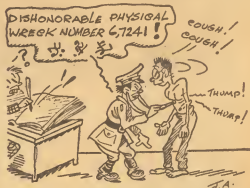
Better still, Dr. Seiichi, get Jonah's book and study it. You can train yellow boys to get inside a whale and use it for a sub.

Report of Hirohito's Board of Health!

Surveys were made just before Pearl Harbor by Japanese health officials. They were conducted in selected regions and the findings were not so good.

The Sanitary Bureau revealed that out of 130,000 persons in Japan, only ten per cent were free from disease. Seventy-three per cent were afflicted with parasites, 15 per cent with trachoma and 6 per cent with other eye diseases.

Out of every one thousand recruits examined by the Tojo medicos, 450 Jappos



have been declared unfit to yelp "Banzai" on the fields of battle. What are we worrying about?

We've got to get down to the correspondence at hand as Frogeyes and two of his pals have dragged in a mail sack that looks like we are conducting a limerick contest.

Frogeyes hands us a long typewritten report from Dennis O'Neill, Jr., of 207 Crescent Avenue, Syracuse, N. Y. Dennis better be good or he will get a taste of the salt mines up there in that town. Take a chair, everybody, as Dennis has not written a vignette:

A friend of mine just loaned me the Winter, 1941, issue of AIR WAR. Well, so far the only part of the mag. I've had a chance to read has been Prop Wash, so I'm afraid I can't pass judgment on the stories yet. But I will stick my neck out on one thing and that's on the subject of certain elements sometimes parked in your column. I think you should have a special part of your dept. set aside for these birds.

I think a suitable title for them would be "Belly Wash." And now before brother Byrns calls out the Gestapo maybe I should say that I could still be converted because as I said before I haven't yet read the mag. itself. I am 19 years old and I would also like to get in my two cents worth on the subject of Pen Pals (or pen enemies whichever the case may be). I think it would be a good idea to have a club of this kind. After all it seems a shame to make all those contributors to your column wait so

(Continued on page 10)

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FOUND ACCORDION EASY

"I've always wanted to play the piano accordion," writes *H. E. from Canada. "But thought I'd never learn it. Then I read about your lessons. I don't know how to express my satisfaction."



AMAZED FRIENDS

"This course has been very interesting. Words cannot express how I have enjoyed it. My friends seem very much pleased with my playing; they can hardly believe I learned without a teacher."—*E. G., Atlanta, Ga.



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PROP WASH

(Continued from page 8)

long to read about what the various readers think about you, your magazine and things in general.

Incidentally it seems that any magazine that's as popular as AIR WAR should come out at least once a month. And speaking of Pen Pals I'd like to hear from some of the birds that read this dept., both male and female. That includes those chums who agree with me and those who would like to rub me out. I also see by your column that a gal known as Joan C. challenges a drip named Worry Wort to a pen and ink war. This sounds like an interesting idea.

Maybe Miss C. would drop me a line and let me know who wins. In fact I'd like to hear from anyone who can write. Which undoubtedly lets out some of the drips who read this dept.

I'll bet good dough that some of them have their keepers write their letters for them (boy, that crack should get a rise out of someone). I could say more on that subject but it would only lead to bloodshed.

That guy who suggested the printing of plans for scale models really had something there. One of my favorite hobbies is making scale models of the various war planes. Speaking of the war now that the traitorous Japs are in the war how about some stories on the boys fighting in such places as Corregidor, the Dutch East Indies, Singapore, Burma, and China? Of course I'd still like to read stories about the war on other fronts. Also how about a story on the attack on Pearl Harbor? Boy, there must be some swell material for a story in that battle.

I also notice in your column a letter from Red Cornell who hails from Buffalo. Red has some interesting stuff in his note. He seems to feel the same way as I do about the idea of having Pen Pals and pen and ink wars. But he certainly has a nerve to insinuate that you would hold a blonde on your lap during business hours. After all how does he know what color hair your sec. has? I would like to hear from brother Red.

Maybe we could get together on that pen and ink war idea. Well I'd better sign off. I've already used up too much space in your column as it is, but this is the first letter to the dept. so maybe you'll overlook it. Well, you probably won't print this letter, Joe, but I can dream, can't I?

We will ignore the thrust regarding our secretary, Dennis. Just because she slipped one day and we caught her as she fell in our lap—that is enough of that.

Your letter was constructive for the most part and we know you are intelligent because you picked our department to read first. We hope Red Cornell and Joan will correspond with you. You stuck your neck out, Dennis, and we bet you will hear from a lot of the customers. Come again, Dennis. From 4340 Buchanan Ave., Detroit, Michigan, comes the next composition. Edward W. Witkowski says:

In the March issue of AIR WAR, I had a letter published. You said that you'd send me a couple of Archibald originals. As yet I have not received them. I thought I had better write about them as maybe you have forgotten to send them. I have just finished reading CAPTAIN DANGER OVER ITALY in the May issue of AIR WAR, and it's swell.

My, my! We wish we had not promised so many of our old masters to the guy from the museum in Washington. But we think there are enough left over for our admirers. Since Laval is acting the way he is, we are going to demand that the State Dept. write Vichy and get our original drawings back from the Louvre. Then we will have enough to go around.

Thanks for the kind words regarding Capt. Danger, Eddie.

Another nice letter comes to light and it was sent in by Dick San Felipe, 1310 N. 15th Street, Milwaukee, Wisc. Dick goes for PROP WASH, too. Look what was brewed in Milwaukee!

Being a new reader of AIR WAR and R.A.F. ACES and SKY FIGHTERS, I passed up your column to read about Captain Danger, but I should have read your article in the Spring Issue first. Boy, Herman Beep came close to finally solving the rubber shortage. (I nearly fell off the davenport after reading about Beep).

As for that fugitive from an airport who signs as "John Doe" I think he is worse than a rotten Jap. Anybody can run down a column but it takes some nerve to sign your name after writing a letter which runs the column down. John Doe doesn't have to buy the mag, for this isn't a dictatorship.

Your column and stories are superb but why don't you have a few stories about Lighter-than-air-craft like blimps?

Please send a picture of yourself as I want to see who the object of all this sarcasm is if it's okay with you.

Enroll me in your club and of course add my name to your mail buddies list.

We wish that Fifth Avenue photographer would get those pictures developed. We posed for him six months ago and have only heard from him once. He said to be patient as it was a tough job to make a head like a turnip look like Victor Mature.

Glad you like Herman, Dick. You seem to like everything about AIR WAR and we know you'll get somewhere in the world.

Raymond Bennett writes from Fresno, California. Ray also wants our picture and samples of our work. While we go in and show the boss these last three communications from the reader front, you all mull this one over.

I have just read your Spring Issue of AIR WAR. It was really swell. I think Captain Danger was in his best.

I always read your column first and it's pretty hot. I think BOMBS FOR MANILA was good. But ONE LIFE FOR ALL was (I won't tell anybody) sort of corny.

How about your picture and some of your drawings?

Well, looks like I'm running out of gas until next time.

Nice going, Ray. We did not get anywhere with the boss. He told us we were getting too fatheaded over the mail and that he knew seven other guys who could take our place. What have you got to say to that, customers? Am I going to have a pal or not?

Another Ray of sunshine follows up with this stint. Ray Owens lives in the sticks and gets his mail in a box labeled R.F.D. No. 1. Box 34, Clintwood, Virginia. Ray goes all out for your Old Man and also wants some originals. Listen to Ray:

You don't mind my calling you by your last name, do you? I have just finished your Spring issue of AIR WAR and I think it is swell. I have read your companion mags, such as R.A.F. ACES, THE AMERICAN EAGLE, and SKY FIGHTERS, but AIR WAR has them all beat.

Don't let them dumb guys batter you for you will always have one pal, that will help you when you are down and out. Will you please send me one of your drawings and your picture? If they are as good as the stories you write, they ought to be swell. Watch out for that blonde sec.

We have put your name down on the preferred list, pal. We have instructed our
(Continued on page 102)

Your future

May Be
Inside
These
Pages!



One has only
to study the
news about

business expansions, war production, new taxes and regulations to see that wherever business is busy accountants are busy. For remember: this is the profession back of the financial success and progress of all other enterprises. And accountancy incomes of \$2,000 to \$5,000, or more, yearly, certainly aren't earnings to be dismissed lightly!

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Frankly, they are important ones—and numerous. Beginning opportunities as bookkeeper, cost clerk, billing clerk, time clerk. Advanced opportunities to serve in big and small business firms; advising on finance, analyzing costs, helping to shape policies. Opportunities to qualify in the Governmental accounting jobs that are opening up more and more. Opportunities in private practice, as a cost consultant or C.P.A.

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These are facts that invite your thorough investigation as to what LaSalle Training for this profession of many opportunities has in store for you.

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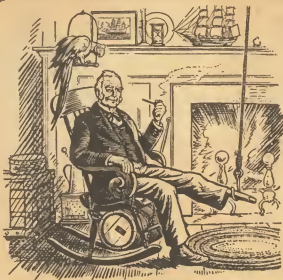
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Name.....Age.....

Address.....

Present Position.....



Capt. Boy is (1799-1882)—like many old salts—rocked a keg of whiskey smooth under his rocker. This replaced the roll of tossing clippers on which he'd mellowed many a barrel.

Old Salts Rocked Whiskey Mellow . . . gave us the idea for Rocking Chair!



Mr. Boston recognized that "rocking" improves whiskey. So he produces Rocking Chair by controlled agitation in a special blending process.



Try Rocking Chair! You will find it a new adventure in flavor—smooth as whiskeys "rocked in the keg". And you'll find the price surprisingly thrifty.

85 Proof (80 Proof in some States)
75% Grain Neutral Spirits
Ben-Burk, Inc., Boston, Mass.



OLD MR. BOSTON BRAND ROCKING CHAIR BLENDED WHISKEY



Gosh, I don't know which!



How I Solved My Liquor Dither by don herold

I used to quiver with confusion every time I started out to buy some sort of indoor drinking ammunition. I was baffled by brands—hundreds of them. I'm not a liquor expert, are you? I mean, drinking is a pleasure with me—not a life work.

Then an old-timer, a friend of mine who has been around a lot of liquors, said "Settle on Old Mr. Boston."

Yes, sir! "Old Mr. Boston" is a handy handle by which we buyers can grasp this whole liquor-brand proposition.

Just imagine! More than 30 different liquors under ONE name—all good—all pleasant to the palate and purse. There are whiskeys, gins, brandies, and a bunch of tasty cordials and liqueurs. All Old Mr. Boston. All reasonable in price.

You've solved the liquor-brand problem for me, Old Mr. Boston



Every drink in the Old Mr. Boston line smacks of that skilled New England craftsmanship which for three centuries has been the tradition of the great old city of Boston.

Why play hide and seek with liquor brands? Join me today, and settle on good Old Mr. Boston.



A crowd of soldiers watched the figure that climbed out under the guns of the boat crew

MASK OF GLORY

By WILLIAM O'SULLIVAN

*Skid Carr, Crop-Dusting Pilot from the U.S.A., Finds
Himself in the Middle of a Nazi Spy Plot That It
Takes a Slue of Bombers and Fighters to Break Up!*

CHAPTER I

Cousin of an Ace

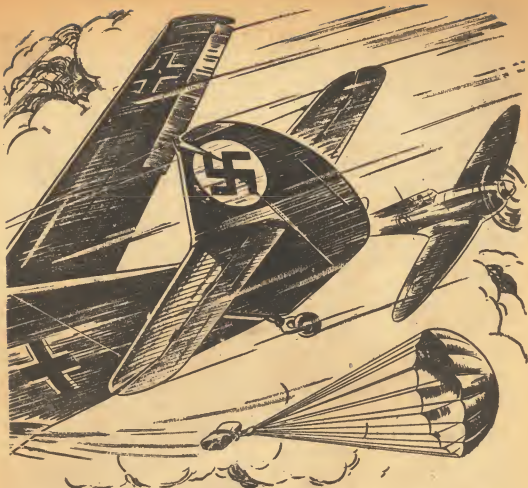
CLOSER and closer, the plane came roaring across the field and hurtled for the narrow, dusty road at one end. Some men swore feelingly, and one made a break for the shelter of a tree. Death was pouring from that plane — leaden death. Arsenate of lead, to be specific.

"One million more boll weevils bite the dust," Kirk "Skid" Carr yawned in the pit of that plane, as he coolly eyed the narrow gap that offered between the fence top and the telephone wires. "There's a war going on, and real work to be done. And look at me!"

Which was precisely what the on-lookers at the Arkansas cotton plantation were doing: looking at Skid Carr tool the Stearman Special in a way that only crop-dusters and other

An Exciting Novel of Fighting Courage





Skid slid the hatch of his plane open and wafted the packet out, with a prayer on his lips

fools could and did. . . .

The white cloud of death that streamed behind the plane from its gun, held in a line, then settled along the building tops of the cotton plants and widened out. The fence was now a hundred feet away . . . now half a hundred feet . . . now it was too late to zoom the telephone wires. But Skid had no intention of zooming them.

The plane snaked through that narrow gap between fence and wires, moaned up in a zooming turn, dived again, and Skid flicked the gun open at the precise moment his tail wheel cleared the top fence rail on his return trip. One more row and he would be through.

"Dog mah cats!" the man behind the tree gasped. "If that ain't the bigges' fool Ah ever did see! Well, shut mah mouth!"

Another of the group in the road

grinned and laid a yellow line of tobacco juice with the wind. "'Saves gas and time,' he says," he related. "That way, he kin lay the poison from edge to edge of the field." He sobered, his eyes awed when he told his listeners: "'That gap between the fence and the wires is all of eleven feet,' he done told me. 'And the plane is only nine-foot-two. I got more than twenty inches to burn when I come through.' Yassuh, his very words!"

"That big guy should be in the movies," another said. "Must touch two inches more than six feet; and with that Gable mustache, he'd panic the gals into a stampede."

"That big guy should be in this here war," the first speaker corrected. "He's got shoulders like a—a Prussian drill-master I seed once in pictures! An' his eyes can turn meaner'n a rattlesnake!"

"Wonder what he thinks about—

his insurance?" asked another, and brought a general laugh. "Look, he's comin' in now, ain't he?"

In the pit of that crop-dusting ship, Skid Carr wasn't thinking so much differently than one of those men on the ground was. The difference was, Skid knew the answers. All of them. And hated them.

One reason he wasn't in the war was that he feared joining the U. S. Army would mean a long wait for active service. And active service against the Nazis he wanted, with and for a vengeance!

The reason the R.A.F. wouldn't have him—on all three tries—was something else again. Something personal. Very personal. Skid cursed himself as a fool for having mentioned it, in his application a year ago. He remembered again the face of the officer at Ottawa Headquarters, his gasp of amazement.

"What? I say, old chap—you're not pulling my leg, eh? Your cousin—your *first* cousin, your uncle's son—is Kurt von Kahr? *Kurt von Kahr!*"

SKID stared at the man grimly. He could see the answer from here to there, but he tried hard.

"He's dead, isn't he?" he asked. "Downed in a Channel dog-fight after Dunkerque? Anyway, he's part of the reason I want to get in. Kurt von Kahr talked me into bringing my money—what I had of it—into Germany, before the war. It's still there. In Kurt's estate, I guess. There are other reasons, sure. But—well, that will give you an idea."

"But"—the officer's eyes showed he hadn't listened — "Kurt von Kahr's cousin! The Nazi ace who shot down more than ninety Allied planes before our lads got him! And you lived in Germany, yourself? You *lived* there?"

"So did a lot of refugees," Skid reminded the man. "Look—my grandfather was Ambassador to Germany. My uncle, who was one of the secretaries at the Embassy, married a Ger-

man. But his wife always hated Americans, hated anything that wasn't German. So much so that, when my uncle died, she changed my cousin's name—we were both named for Granddad—from Kirk Carr to Kurt von Kahr."

The cold mask of decision was on the Englishman's face now. But he sought an easier way out.

"Of course, we can't hold you responsible for the relationship," he murmured. "Didn't like the blighter much, eh, you say?"

Skid shrugged. "He was one smooth baby," he said. "Big, rough and tough—but with a gloss of enameled manners covering it all up. Even when he would be cheating me worst, he acted as if he were conferring a favor on me. His final favor was stripping me of my dough and getting me kicked out of Germany. He was a natural born Nazi, all right. Just the type. And just the type I hate. That's why I want to get in!"

The R.A.F. officer murmured, his eyes troubled. "Lot of odd things going on, don't you know, old chap? Prisoners escaping from Canada all the time; and all the time they are Nazi aces. And all the time they get back to Germany. Plans of our planes—routes of ferry bombers—departure and course of convoys of ships—odd accidents to our own crack pilots, right here in Canada." He threw up his hands. "Can't be too careful, can we, old man?"

Skid's eyes had iced over at this, and his muscles moved suggestively under his jacket. "I hope you don't mean—me?"

"Oh, no, no, old chap! Hardly, ha ha! Can't hold a man responsible for his relatives, what? We'll all be hung pronto, eh?" The official manner succeeded this. "You don't hold a Commercial License, I see. Too bad, old fellow, too bad."

Later, when he had his Commercial, it was:

"No Instrument Rating, what? Too

bad, old man, too bad! Can't use you, you see."

BUT they used others, without Commercial tickets, without Instrument Ratings, without time in Class 4-M—multi-motored planes weighing more than 10,000 pounds and less than 25,001 pounds. Which was what the official excuse was when Skid Carr had got his Commercial and had bought, from his meagre funds, an Instrument Rating.

"Where will I get Four-M time?" he had blared, at this latest official excuse. "The British are getting all our Four-and-Five-M ships; and what they don't get are sewed up in airline work in the States. Come out from behind your diplomatic bush and speak English. Tell me that Kurt von Kahr's cousin, American or not, isn't wanted. Tell me you are afraid I'm a Nazi stooge, helping prisoners to escape, spying on your planes, and convoys, and tricking your ships up to crash. Tell me that! But you better be on your feet, with your fists up!"

Instead, the R.A.F. officer made an inked note on Skid's *dossier*, and said coldly, "I'll tell you something more to the point, old chap: Get out of Canada; and stay out! It's quite all right when you come here in an orderly manner; but when you threaten a man on His Majesty's Service, we're through! That will be all, Carr."

"Mister Carr, to you!" the aroused Skid had shouted. "And any time you think you can fly, I'd like to be round. With just a kite of a Cub to show you up in. You and your smooth-faced excuses, getting me to waste my time and money. Kurt von Kahr at his oily slickest wasn't any worse than you! And when Kurt came into the open, he came!"

"Mister Carr, you will please get out and stay out!" the man had said, in alarm. "Or must I call the guard?"

Later, on the way back in the *All-Canada Airways* plane, Skid had cooled down enough to grin and

think: "Anyway, he didn't ask me what Kurt looked like. Good thing, too. I bet he'd have had me arrested as Kurt's ghost!"

The resemblance had been remarkable, before Skid had thoughtfully added one feature to his clean-featured face. Purposely, he had added it. It wasn't much, but it served, after a fashion.

The Carr men had all been noted for their bulk, their clean good looks that somehow marked them alike to one another, and apart from other men. Kurt von Kahr had been one of these men.

Only an unnoticeable two years older than Skid, they had had fun more than once, in other days, over being taken one for the other. Laughable, it was, then.

But Kirk had stopped laughing about a lot of things when Germany went Nazi, and Kurt went Nazi with it. He stopped laughing about his resemblance to his cousin and did things about it.

He grew a narrow, straight line of a black mustache that bordered his strong mouth in a way that killed the high upper-lip for which the Carrs were noted.

But even then, occasional friends of Kurt's would mistake him for the Nazi with a new facial adornment. It was in the set of their heads on their broad, straight shoulders—in the keen, searching glance of the eyes that could be the soft gray of a mist over early morning water or the flaring gray of hard, brittle steel, the stamp of the Carr men.

Even on that trip back from Otawa, a puzzled passenger had looked long at Skid, then leaned across the aisle to say, "Taking a busman's holiday, eh? Riding a transport instead of piloting one?"

Skid had come out of his funk to stare. "I wish I were a transport pilot," he had said, with a short laugh. "I'm just a Commercial pilot with not enough ratings."

"Oh! I—I thought you had piloted me once or twice, on my trips in Canada. I see the difference now. Not the same man at all."

CHAPTER II

Two Faces East

SKID wasn't the same man as the one who had gone up to Canada three times. He came back angered at the R.A.F. officer, and angered with himself for telling everything so frankly.

"I could fight as hard without shooting my mouth off!" he told himself. "But now Kirk Carr is black-listed with the R.A.F." He recalled the officers' inked-in line, knew it to be something very definite against him and for all time. "Still, I *could* try to save up enough dough to buy some Four-M time. Maybe at Boeing, in California. But it will take a hell of a long time!"

It was in Omaha that he got a shock when a furtive individual with a trace of guttural in his speech came close to him in the air port café and said,

"I scarcely knew you, *mein* friend!" Then, after a quick look around, "What do you do so far West?"

Skid had been amused, then. "I try to make money, stranger. And I'm sort of glad you scarcely knew me. In fact, I'd be gladder if you made up your mind you didn't know me, and scrambled. *Schnell!* Fast!"

When the little man had scurried away, Skid puzzled. "Who did he think I looked like, I wonder —"

Skid remembered that day well. Later, it was, that a wheel had come off when he was taxiing around. Longer than usual, he had taxied. He had a queer feeling that something was wrong, and he couldn't make up his mind what it was. He taxied to the runway, circled to his right, and then came off the runway, to the dis-

gust of the control tower. He taxied near the hangars, then asked Control Tower for clearance, and scudded back to the runway and off it again.

"Get off—or get back into a hangar!" the control tower operator had blared through the miked-in system of the plane. "Scramble!"

The wheel came off just as Skid was getting ready to scramble—before he was off the ground. It wasn't bad; but it would have been something if it had come off when he was making a landing—perhaps something fatal!

Then came St. Louis, and that man who stared at him in the hangar, and yelled, "Say, is Canada taking over the whole country? What are you doing down here?"

Skid had puzzled about it and said, "I've been to Canada, but I'm not a



Canadian. I'm a Yank, a commercial pilot."

"Nertz! That Gable mustache don't fool me. Look—you pilot a transport, don't you?"

Skid had showed his log-book, and his licenses. "How about it?"

"Okay, pal! But you got a twin!"

"Dead," Skid could have told him, but didn't. "And not a twin—a cousin."

Skid remembered that day, too. Or night, rather. He was jumping off for Arkansas and this crop-dusting job when it got to him—that strong smell of gasoline.

He had thought, "The grease-monkeys must have spilled it all over the nose of the crate, when they were gassing it up."

AT EIGHT hundred feet exactly, by the altimeter—Skid had climbed and started along the downwind leg of the compulsory rectangular course about the field—the motor-

bed burst into flame. A screaming slip away from the flames, and a fish-tail set-down with brakes jamming on close by the hangar, had saved him and the ship.

The mechanics stared when Skid fished out the bundles of rags that had been soaked and then stuffed into the hiding place under the cowl.

"Getting careless, somebody is," he said flatly, but his eyes were the gray of a battleship steaming up under a head of trouble. "Must have been in a hurry, the guy that cleaned this crate up for me."

"Sure was," someone sang out. "Just hired out here today; the guy did. And left maybe an hour before you did. Quit. Funny—he was a good worker, too!"

After some thought, Skid had looked up the man who had queried him about Canada. "Hey! Who did you think I was, anyway?"

"Huh? Oh, it's you. I thought you were a guy flew me once, in Canada. Don't know his name. Looks a lot like you."

Skid's face had cleared, then. He was recalling the man on the New York-bound transport, making the same mistake.

"Be seein' you, pal," he said.

But it was at Little Rock that a pilot came walking along and stopped to yelp: "Skid Carter! Hey, what's up? They lay you off or something?"

"Skid Carr, not Carter," the pilot of the Stearman Special had corrected. "Look, I must be very common looking. Everybody is taking me for someone else. You nearly got my name; but I swear I don't know you."

"Huh? I co-piloted for you a trip. On the Alberta run, remember? Then I got a bid to make more dough down here. Hey, aren't you Skid Carter, the *All-Canada Airways* pilot?"

"'Skid' is a fairly common name, in the flying business," Skid Carr thought. "And I guess there are a bunch of Carrs and Carters, too; but

—I wonder how many look like me?"

He told himself, later, "I'll have to look this Skid Carter up, when I get time. Maybe he can help me. The fact we look alike, and are named a lot alike, might help to get me into Four-M work."

But what really prompted him was the peculiar set-up that he was constantly, and increasingly, taken for someone else. Always at airports. And each time it happened, it wasn't long before something happened to his ship. And mysteriously disappearing men.

Coincidence? Maybe. Things like that happened. Things were nearly always happening, in one way or another; and maybe it was just odd that he tied the things up that way. He looked like somebody.

When it was established he wasn't that somebody, things sort of started to happen. Even in Little Rock, he had been taken for a man named, of all things, Skid Carter!

SKID had looked his ship over with the help of a quiet, manly private pilot who had been working on a ship in the hangar. Nothing wrong. The ship was acting fine, after several hours of crop-dusting. And that meant giving the crate a beating, and no mistake.

When you dust crops, you compete against other bids. The trick was, how to powder the rows to save the most time and cut expenses. Skid had perfected a system of saving lots of time by skinning between fence and wire. That gave him quick turns, close to the ground, and saved him lots of extra work in finishing off the field.

He was finishing that last row and starting to zoom into another turn for a landing and his pay; when he noticed the growing mushiness of the controls. Puzzled he squinted a quick look at the nearing gap of the fence, and decided on the instant to zoom out of it until he had located the

cause of that slow reaction of the controls to his foot- and hand-pressure.

Suddenly, the stick was dead, un-answering in his hand; and the rudder-bar was swinging uselessly under his footsole pressure on the floor of the pit.

"Oh-oh!" the big pilot breathed, his eyes steely behind his goggles. "The same pattern . . . someone 'recognizing' me . . . and someone getting to my plane, later!" He grinned a harsh grimace when he thought: "I'll have to look into this, sure enough. This is no coincidence!"

But even that was doubtful, now. Very doubtful. With the plane streaking along at top speed, close to the ground, and that gap in the wires and fence so close, it was doubtful if he'd ever do anything about things again, ever. Not with all his controls run out!

One face that was hard, craggy, keen-eyed, had gone down under the blazing guns of R.A.F. fighters off Dunkerque, far to the east. Now a face identically like it, but with the rakish difference of a slender mustache, faced east at the controls of a faltering, crippled Stearman Special in Arkansas.

It came to Skid with grim humor that he, too, was faced east, as he roared for the wires so close ahead. Kurt got his going east, too.

Two faces, one dead, the other about to die. Two faces east.

Skid sighed and reached for the handle of the elevator-tab in the roof. It could be done, flying with the rudder-and elevator-tabs. It was done, during instruction, to show the pupil that the plane was inherently stable, would just about fly itself when rigged right.

But you didn't do it so close to the ground, and going between the top fence-rail and the wires. Skid worked fast, his eyes like a pair of gray agates.

CHAPTER III

Death on High

FORCING a grin, Skid said to the planter, "Sure, it was close. I thought I'd give you a finishing touch, to remember me by!"

He broke off when he had Little Rock airport on the telephone. After he had given his name. "Look," he said, "there's a private pilot by name of Tarch, or Torch—something like that—who helped me look over my ship this morning. Huh? . . . You're sure there's no such party at that hangar? . . . I see . . . No, nothing—nothing that you can do. No . . . I won't be back. I'm going to Canada!"

In New York he asked at LaGuardia Field about *All-Canada Airways*. He asked a lot. Specifically. After a time, he got some information.

"Carter—Captain Carter—is flying the Ottawa-Montreal hop, and sometimes the Ottawa-Windsor hop." The man stared. "Say, aren't you Captain Carter?"

"I wouldn't be paying my way, would I?" Skid asked dryly. He demanded a ticket to Ottawa. The man asked a question. "Yep, the Canadian Consul General in New York okayed me," Skid told him. He showed him his papers. He didn't add, "But it was only after a bit of a row, and because the mug knew my grandfather!"

In Ottawa, he grimly acknowledged a dozen salutations.

He was a bit tense when a pilot yelled, "Ah, there, Carter! You're a rapid dresser, old chap! How'd you get out of uniform so speedily, what? Ship just now got in, didn't it?"

Skid went to the portal where the pilots and crew would have to pass through in leaving the field. He was thinking a lot of things. Among them, "I'm a fool. This is nuts, this notion I have that just because nobody saw Kurt dead, that he isn't dead, that no-

body but a Carr could look so much like another Carr. I——"

He broke it off at sight of a figure coming toward him. His dazed eyes took in the cant of the head on that strong neck, the broad, erect shoulders, the tapering hips, the strong, springy legs, the powerful hands. He swallowed twice before he could speak. Then:

"Hi, Kurt! *Wie Gehets, Mein Kamerad!*"

The big, dark man paused, his gray eyes mocking and amused. "What's your trouble, pal?" he asked slangily. "Got a snoot full of Scotch?" He looked at Skid soberly, not a bit furtive or surprised or in a hurry. "Hell, you are sober, aren't you? Made a mistake, I take it. My name is Carter. Skid Carter. I pilot for *All-Canada Airways.*"

Skid said, "Sure you do, Kurt. And don't I know it! You're a good pilot, too, I'll bet. Almost as good a pilot as you are a swimmer, huh? That's a long paddle—from Dunkerque right up the St. Lawrence to here. Nice going, cousin!"

The other laughed. "You're balmy!" He turned his head, whistled an armed guard over from nearby. "Better back up the wagon, Jim—this lad is balmy. Clean nuts! Speaks German, talks about swimming the Atlantic—and insists I'm his cousin!"

Skid Carr took a look at the guard and saw that this other pilot, if indeed he was Kurt von Kahr—unbelievable as that seemed—was also very well fixed in his identity. Skid saw he would have to handle things swiftly to keep from further trouble with the Canadians. Until he could get time, look up this Carter, get to the right officials who would look it over soberly. He altered his manner instantly.

"Skip it," he grinned. "I'm a fellow peelo^t up from the States. Just hav-



The ship was a blooming mass of flames as Skid stepped through the hatch into the gray rain

ing a bit of fun with you, Carter. People say we look a lot alike, so I came along to have a look." He showed the guard his papers. "Skip it."

"Skip nothing!" the other blared, his gray eyes ugly. "You're balmy. Dangerous, maybe, too! I think you'd better be pulled in."

THE guard was puzzled. "Here, now," he said. "Captain Carter, the man is on the up-and-up about things. His papers is quite all right. What's the matter—can't you fellows take jokes, you airmen?"

The Canadian pilot shrugged and a mask of a smile slid over his face. "I'm just joking back—see?" He eyed Skid. "Join me in a drink?"

"Hardly," Skid murmured, his eyes troubled. What was he to believe—his senses or his instinct, his knowledge, his sureness, that this man was Kurt von Kahr! "I'm busy. Maybe some other time." He eyed the other closely to detect any signs of planned escape that might show in that craggy face. "Or won't you be around?"

"I will," the man Carter laughed. "I'm funny that way." He waved a hand and walked away in the direction of the airport operations building.

Skid veered the other way, and soon was in a taxi speeding for R.A.F. Headquarters.

"Don't do like the others," Skid told the driver. "Don't go Canada-patriotic and try to take me to the R.C.A.F.! This isn't enlistment. This is something else again! I want the R.A.F.!"

The driver grunted and swerved off to another street.

The officer was all but apoplectic at Skid's grim insistence.

"Look here, my man," he said, "you are bent on making trouble, aren't you? Of all the balmy yarns—suspecting that Carter, the transport pilot, is von Kahr come to life again. What rot! Heavens, man—suppose I

should say *you* are Von Kahr! Would you expect people to take me seriously?"

Skid started. This was something he hadn't thought of. Suppose Carter, driven to a corner and desperate, should swear he were the American, and that Skid was the Nazi! Skid grunted with the shock of the thought, and made up his mind to go a bit slower. He saw endless danger, if once the British speculated on his looking like Kurt!

"I'm only doing what I think to be my duty, sir. If you will not listen, I'll find somebody who will. After all, it should be easy to prove me wrong, according to you. I'll be the first to admit it!"

The officer looked troubled for the first time. It wouldn't do at all to be reported as derelict in his duty, even in so improbable a case as this. He thought about it, then reached out a hand for a bell on his desk.

"I'll have an assistant take care of your complaint, or accusation, or whatever it can be called," he growled. "He can take down the facts—as you think them to be—and report to me on the whole thing."

Skid shrugged his helplessness to do other than accept this crumb. It was a starter, anyway. Maybe, even, the assistant would be the right sort. Younger, anxious for promotion, more imaginative and open-minded.

He was sure of it when the latter, an apple-cheeked blond lad of maybe twenty-one years, heard the start of it and speedily took him to a secluded, private office where they could be alone, and not overheard. When Skid had finished, the young officer murmured:

"Deuced interesting, eh? And what possibilities! Those 'accidents' of yours! Perfect proof, if we are right, of a far-flung Nazi spy system. Following you around, by Jove, to get to you! Eh? Maybe, even, this Carter fellow—the blighter—plans to step into your very own shoes when he has

got you—er—bending. What?"

Skid laughed, he was so pleased with this tone. "What do you suggest?"

"Utmost secrecy! *Utmost!* Not a word to anybody. Right? Meet me tonight here." He scribbled an address on a slip of paper, showed it to Skid, and tore it to tiny bits again. "Tonight at eleven. I'll have other interested parties on hand to talk with you. Meanwhile, I'll do a bit of tracking down on this blighter—er—Carter. And thank you for being so frank with me!"

A LITTLE later Skid was following the bellhop through a colorful, uniformed throng at the Chateau Frontenac. Free French officers of the Polish Legion, Navy Flag officers, high-ranking British and Canadian officers in O. D. and in kilts, and the growing contingent of keen-eyed, brown-faced American pilots in uniform and in mufti that thronged across the border in ever-swelling numbers.

"Maybe I'll be with you lads yet!" Skid thought, as he looked his envy.

He had a strong feeling that things were coming to a climax when he stood, hours later, outside the secluded house where he was to meet with Marby, the young R.A.F. man. And Marby's associates.

For a moment, looking at the dark and shuttered house, Skid thought he had somehow mistaken the secret rendezvous. But at his knock, the heavy door swung, and a guarded lamp made a small light for him to follow along a dank, black hall. Another door—and there was Marby, sitting easily at a long table facing him, his duty-belt with its holstered automatic before the officer's place. The man who had admitted Skid vanished.

"Welcome, Carr!" Marby exclaimed; but he didn't rise. "Take a chair, old chap. Carter is getting us drinks. Out back, in the pantry."

"Oh." Skid stared at the door be-

yond. "Carter is here? And the others you wish to talk this over with?"

"They're with him." Marby turned. "I say, back there!"

The door kicked inward, and Skid breathed his amazement. There the man stood—Carter; or Kurt von Kahr—in fashionably cut suit and immaculate linen. But he was wearing the long, shadowy, slender and black mustache that Skid himself had so long worn!

"What the——" Skid grunted, unable to figure things out. "What's the trick now? That mustache!"

The newcomer smiled in faint amusement and spoke to the two who followed him. One carried a tray with drinks; the other, tastefully arranged appetizers. But it was their faces that caught Skid's eyes.

"My cousin first, *bitte*," Skid's double spoke evenly. "We must at all times show courtesy, *Herr* Tasche. You, *Herr* Schenzer, set the appetizers on the small table. *Danke*. Thank you so much."

"You are Kurt von Kahr!" Skid snapped, struggling to his feet. "You admit it, at last!" He faced Marby. "I don't understand the trick with the mustache, nor why this man—and his mates—are not under arrest! That one there—Schenzer—is the grease-monkey who tried to burn my plane in St. Louis! Tasche, the one with the drinks, is the 'private pilot' who sawed my control cables in Little Rock! I swear it! For Pete's sake, why do you sit there and do nothing while—*Oh!*"

Skid's stunned exclamation broke it off. His eyes were on Marby with new appraisal. On Marby, whose hand was now on the automatic, and who watched him with the faintest trace of a grin easing his tense, set face. Skid dropped back into the chair again, his eyes asking the question of this R.A.F. officer; and getting the answer.

"What a fool I've been!" the Yank

pilot blurted, bitterly. "A fool!"

"On the contrary, dear cousin," Kurt von Kahr remonstrated mildly, "you have been most wise. Three times, you have foiled the efforts of our very best agents to put you out of the way quietly." He sighed. "I do not jest when I say that I am sorry."

SKID fought the conviction that this was a horrible joke, an improbable masquerade, a grisly bit of R.A.F. humor to spoof the suspicious commercial pilot who made such brash accusations against a reputable airline pilot. He knew it was not so, when he looked up and met his supposedly dead cousin's careful gaze.

"You can't get away with this, Kurt," he said flatly. "You haven't got away with it. I spotted you! Others will; if they haven't already. I—I can't figure out how you got here; but it's an open guess what you are doing. Easy." His eyes shifted to the R.A.F. man. "Except for this *swine!*"

Marby smiled, a touch of condescension in his manner.

It was Kurt who murmured, "Please, my dear Kirk, your manners! Marby is of our same political persuasion, although he is—ah—English." He shrugged. "It is this stupidity, if you will permit the expression, that is wrecking your silly democracies—the belief that to be Nazi, one must be German. There are many Nazis in all countries; just as there are many Germans who are not Nazi."

"Nazi-ism is a diseased state of mind," Skid grated. "And Marby, by any other name, is still a traitor!"

"Not to his heart and his intellect," Kurt said, choosing a chair and sipping alternately at his drink and puffing at a cigarette. "But let us not waste time in recriminations, my dear cousin. The point is—your activities with regard to me have been—ah—disconcerting. They have made it imperative that Skid Carter die." He

smiled at the nickname, "And that Skid Carr return to the United States. However, it is unfortunate that there shall be a slight change in the identity of these men—Carr and Carter."

Skid nodded when it came to him. "I get it. I am to be blotto, and you —"

"And I, Skid Carr," Von Kahr shrugged his regrets. "It is war, my dear cousin. You see, there is much work to do. I was a marked man in the German Air, and my Leader thought it best to use me for his purposes in this hemisphere. An *unter-sea* boat took this 'dead' man across!"

"At your suggestion," Skid snapped. "Because we look alike."

"You are correct," Kurt said. "Also, to a great extent, you have helped us. You see, we were going about this slowly, to establish ourselves comfortably. But your curiosity speeded things up. However, it is as well, since you had to go in the end. There is much to do."

"Sure," Skid growled. "Some clean Nazi work! Sabotaging ships, bombing and blowing up factories and killing workers, spying on convoys, and the rest of your cowardly ways of fighting!"

Kurt's eyes flashed fire for the first time.

He set his glass down with a bang and growled, "It is not my choosing; rather, my duty. I am doing it!" He sneered when he added, "And from your list of 'Nazi tricks' you left out one that is very important. Very! It is moral and financial assistance to your 'patriots' who struggle to keep your country out of the war. May I point out this would not be possible without your fine democratic patriots?"

Skid's forehead was beaded with perspiration that didn't come from the mid-summer's heat.

"You're crazy!" he blurted. "You can't get away with it! Sure; Marby being planted at R.A.F. headquarters helps. He probably okayed your pa-

pers, is smoothing the way for you. And others. You have a spy ring that stretches clear from here to Los Angeles, from Seattle to Miami! I've seen evidence of that. But they'll get to you, just as I got to you. You'll be through, and your damned Nazi undercover work will be through with you!"

THE German laughed shortly. "When the world is Nazi, there will be nobody to complain, my dear cousin. Who would a Nazi complain to? Another Nazi?" He gestured to Marby when his cool eyes noted the time on his wristwatch. "I think we are prepared, yes?"

"To the letter of your instructions, *Herr Kolonel!* The plane is at the appointed place. The four parachutes are packed and ready." His eyes touched the four men in the room. They were grim with meaning when they stopped on Skid. "It is fortunate you are not to have a 'chute, Carr, since we have only the one twenty-eight-foot one for a man your size. For your cousin, *Herr Kolonel* von Kahr. The rest of us are smaller, can use the more common twenty-four-foot 'chutes."

"And how I hope they don't open," Skid snarled, his mind busy—and baffled. He could see no way out of anything they had planned.

Kurt smiled faintly. "Our plans are always perfect." He looked at Tasche.

"The razor, *bitte.*"

"Some time you are going to slip, and then your plans will be perfect busts!" Skid taunted, his eyes busy at the same time with means of escape, but finding none. He stared at Tasche, approaching with a razor. "What is the party—to cut my throat first?"

"Please, my cousin!" Kurt breathed reproachfully. "It is merely to shave the mustache. My own synthetic lip adornment will soon be replaced by one as handsome, one can hope!"

Skid went suddenly still, as if in surrender; then, with Tasche bending over to wipe the line of hair from his lip, the American went into action. He gripped Tasche's wrist, tore the razor from his fingers, and in another moment had the man twisted about and shielding Skid from that gun Marby now had gone for.

When Kurt sprang forward, Skid slashed viciously at him. The Nazi laughed softly and cursed, and then that entry door was open and the guard there, his gun jammed purposefully into Skid's back. The Yank gave it up.

"I can't battle the whole Nazi spy system," he sighed.

Kurt's eyes glinted. "I admire your spirit, cousin! It makes me proud of the same blood that flows in my own veins. If only you were of us, if only you had intelligence, instead of stupid political beliefs."

[Turn page]



Bowling – or Biking



"Better to be a dead freeman than a live Nazi," Skid taunted him. "You will find out, old boy—when your Leader sheds the mask of glory that the victor wears, and becomes the frank, undisguised fiend he is!"

"Silence!" Kurt roared, his face mottled with rage. "You have only a short time to live, at best. But death high in the skies is better than to be shot like a dog for your vile utterances against my Leader!"

Skid shook his head in wonder. "You're crazy, the whole lot of you. Crazy! But we Americans are just as crazy for liberty and democracy as you are for your fool political ideas of enslaving nations. You will be got, and got right. America is waking up!"

Kurt had control again. "A bit late, eh?" He smiled. "Too late to help one Skid Carter, of *All-Canada Airways*." He pointed at the now clean-shaven Skid. "You, my friend. Complete with my identification. At ten thousand feet—in your own private plane." He made a gesture with his hands. "*Pfui!*"

"While four Nazi mugs float earthward to keep the air of the western hemisphere polluted for another week or two. But you'll be had!"

"We do not make mistakes," Kurt von Kahr said. "The night is warm, cloudy. A plane takes off; with five men. Two men parachute down in the vicinity of a certain German prison camp—to assist two important Nazis to escape. Two others escort you to the proper altitude and leave you when the plane somehow bursts into flames. However, your identification papers and log-book will be safely in the air. With us. What is left of you will be—the remains of Skid Carter!" The Nazi ace looked around him.

At nods of readiness from the others, he clicked his heels and bowed to Skid from the waist. "*Bitte, mein cousin? After you!*"

CHAPTER IV

New Recruit

THE speedy five-seater cruised for perhaps thirty minutes, after Tasche and Schenzer—with files, percussion caps, and sundry other escape equipment that included identification papers supplied by Marby—had left the plane over a selected spot and in the concealing shroud of a gentle rain, their 'chutes cleverly blacked to make for invisibility.

Kurt was at the controls, with Skid sitting impassively at his side. Marby, his automatic carefully on Skid, was alert against another break. Kurt showed a facile ease with the ship that Skid found himself envying. The Nazi was in a reminiscent mood, talking over old times in Germany. At length, he twisted his head, a smile lightening his features.

"And, Kirk," he said using the Yank pilot's Christian name, as always, "recall a certain Gretchen? Gretchen Muller?" He laughed and his teeth made an even white line under the mustache he had faked on. "Ah, but once you had me worried—you two! She was sweet on you, I fancied! But I saw to that!"

Skid remembered. Clearly. Gretchen was a long-legged, somewhat awkward blonde, budding into womanhood. Her wide, china-blue eyes had a freshness that was the freshness of a windswept meadow. Clean, clear, honest.

There had been a time when Skid had felt his heartstrings tugging in an unaccustomed manner, under Gretchen's almost open adoration. But he had supposed, later, she was like all the rest—Nazified.

Kurt chuckled. "You left Germany in time, old chap. For a bit, I had a hard time of it getting on Gretchen's better side. I thank you for quitting the field, my friend. Gretchen and I

have an understanding. After the war, we shall marry."

"Why thank me, when you had me chucked out and kept my money!" He stared. "Doesn't Gretch think you are dead?"

"Gretch!" Kurt mocked. "That silly American habit of nicknames for really pretty names!" But his face had clouded somewhat. "Although she seemed to like your name for her." He sighed. "She knows by now that I am alive. It takes time. Sometimes, very long. But word can be sent, you understand." His eyes focused on the myriad instruments with perfect understanding of their glowing dials. "Ready, Marby?"

Marby had the punctilio of the ardent zealot. "Ready, *Herr Kolonell!*" he said.

"Get the fire-pot set, *bitte!* Swing the hatch open, for our quick departure! Then—your gun on *Herr Carr's* back, while I join you at the hatch!"

Skid grunted. "Listen, pal cousin—if you think I'm going to hold the ship level for you while you set it afire and jump, you're nuts!" He blinked when possibilities suggested themselves.

Kurt was on his feet, the rudder-and elevator-tabs set to hold the ship level while he joined Marby.

"I know human nature," the Nazi chuckled. "You will stay alive just so long as you can! But you need not touch the controls. Until the flames start. Seriously, cousin, my advice is jump, also. It is preferable to death by fire, no?"

Skid watched the dim form in the rear-vision mirror of the cabin. He drew his breath when he saw that Kurt, who had been sitting at the port controls, would cross *between* him and that gun Marby held at ready. Not for long. Just a second. A fraction of a second. One catlike jump and he would be clear! But for just a fraction of time.

"Set the fire-pot, Marby!" Kurt called, holding to his place. "I wish

to see this done properly." When the ruddy glare of the thing was over the cabin, he started swiftly back. "And now, my cousin——"

"Ah, wait a while! Why hurry!" Skid blared.

With the words, he lunged his foot at the rudder, then reached his hand and yanked viciously on the wheel-yoke. The plane zoomed and skidded simultaneously, and there was a gasp from Kurt that broke over the roar of the automatic in Marby's hands.

SKID, low in his seat, snapped a quick look behind. Kurt was a formless shadow on the floor of the cabin. Marby, cursing mechanically, was trying to get to his feet. The fire-pot had rolled into a corner, was licking avidly at the side of the plane.

Carr slammed the plane into another zoom, then leveled it and swarmed over the back of the seat and atop Marby who was dazed by the buffeting he had received. The Yank pilot grimly shoved Marby flat, then swiftly stripped the 'chute harness from the prostrate man.

He pushed his arms into the thing, then made secure the fastenings on his thighs and across his chest.

"Your tough luck, buddy!" he rasped. "But remember this wasn't *my* idea! You better get to the controls—if you think it will do any good! But wait until after I jump!"

He picked up the automatic and looked down at Kurt. "Sorry, cousin, it had to be this way!" he murmured, his eyes on the prone figure.

He hoped, for Kurt's sake, that Marby's misplaced bullet had found a vital spot, had finished off the Nazi ace. "Well, time to go, I guess!"

The ship was a blooming mass of flames, and Marby was sliding into the control seat, his sobs breaking through the hungry crackle of fire.

Skid stepped out into the gray-black rain and counted ten before he pulled the rip-cord. He had been dangling perhaps three minutes, drop-

ping for the unseen earth below, when the muffled report of an explosion plucked at his wind-swept ears. He looked for a moment before he saw it.

A fiery comet was streaking several miles away, diving with ever-growing speed for the earth.

Skid shed his parachute and found a nearby road, walked it until he came to a combination store and filling-station, battered on the doors until a sleepy head thrust itself out a window and asked, in outraged French, if the *blitzkrieg* had then come to the Province of Quebec.

Checking his impatience, Skid insisted on using the telephone. "On His Majesty's Service! Immediately!"

In ten minutes, he had Ottawa R.A.F. The man on the other end was the same who had assigned Marby to Skid.

"What? What! Carr! Carr? Oh, I see—I must have heard wrong! You must be Carter!" Then "That trouble-maker, Skid Carr, stole your plane, Carter. Fact! Just now had word of it crashing, somewhere in nearby Quebec!"

"Full identification. Must have been crazy, that one, eh, Carter? Or worse! Gad, I'd have him before a firing squad if I had him now! Carter, where are you?"

Skid thought fast. Kurt's plan had backfired, and the Canadians thought that he was in that wreck. Dead. It would be best to keep his mouth shut until he could get to Headquarters. If he announced that he was Carr, and proved it, and proved that it was Carter—or Kurt—dead in that plane, he'd be in jail in jig time.

"Carter!" came the roar over the telephone. "Where are you, man?"

"In Quebec, near the wreck," was Skid's prompt reply. "I—traced the plane's movements as best I could. I'm on the way to the scene now. I called up to find if anything had been heard. I saw the ship falling, in flames."

"Meet me there," the other croaked. "Devlish odd business, what? Some of our men are guarding the wreckage, with the A.R.P."

IT WAS a justly grim Skid who met the officer at the scene of the wreckage. Scarred and twisted, it was, and under a nearby blanket, the remains of what had once been a man. One man—but not two! Skid, after showing Carter's identification papers that Kurt had decided to leave on his body, had asked questions.

"Just that Carr blighter in the ship," had been the answer.

Marby must have fallen clear; or jumped. Or——

Skid's eyes were narrowed when he had another thought. "Maybe Kurt was thrown clear! Maybe—maybe Kurt is alive, even!"

The guards shook their heads to Skid's question. "Didn't have a parachute. Positive! The harness buckles wouldn't have melted. Not a trace of 'chute equipment in the wreck!"

Dead or alive, Kurt had been thrown clear. Or had he come to and jumped? Skid didn't know; and until he did, he had to play this to cripple Kurt, block his hand, drive him into a hole until he could be traced. If his body were not found, by morning——

"For the time being, I stay Skid Carter!" the American pilot decided. "If I prove who I am, I'll go to jail. This way, I've got Kurt trapped, if he's still alive. With Carr thought to be dead, he can't reveal himself. Nor can I prove *I'm* the real Skid Carr until I'm sure Kurt is dead!"

He listened grimly to the tale of the R.A.F. officials—how "that blighter Carr" had made all sorts of silly accusations, how he had gone to a hangar and, by fooling the mechanics with his resemblance to the airline pilot, had made off with the plane, how Marby, assigned to question Carr, had disappeared.

"At least, Carr is a murderer!"

"Kurt has done for me, for Skid Carr!" the American told himself. "Like it or not, I've got to stick to his faked-up name and job until I can prove he is dead. If I can't——"

Skid turned sick in his heart when he thought of the consequences if Kurt were alive.

"I'll have to fill in as Carter, transport pilot!" he realized. "And how can I? My lack of experience would show up in a minute, and maybe I'd crack-up, killing the passengers! I'll have to stall, to take time off until things iron out, until I can come back and claim my name, and prove my case about Kurt!"

"Lift you back to the city?" the R.A.F. officers asked, when they had completed their investigation. "You fly later today, don't you, Carter?"

Skid came to with a start. "Eh? Oh, no thanks! I—er—want to see my wreck disposed of. Thanks just the same."

One of the men eyed him keenly. "What time do you fly?"

Skid met the man's gaze squarely. "I don't think I shall," he said slowly. "Not for *All-Canada Airways*, at any rate. I've been thinking of stepping into Army service. With the R.A.F."

The man beamed. "Can't think of a pilot we'd rather have. Not every day one meets a recruit like yourself, Carter. Jolly good idea, old chap!"

IT WAS after he had found and buried his 'chute that Skid had the shock he anticipated. He was waiting for a car to take him to Ottawa when an excited Quebec peasant came into the store and blurted:

"W'at go on here in *Canadie*, eh, Gaston?" When he had the proprietor's full attention: "Sheeps they go down flaming! *Z-z-z-zoom-bam!* And a man come sail through the air in parachute!"

Skid thought for a moment it had been himself had been seen. Tasche and Schenzer had been released far,

far away. But he came to his feet with a grunt when the peasant said:

"You ask, do I see heem! *Moi?* I talk wiz heem! *Ah, mais oui!* He try to buy my car when I not lend it. He have ze burned hand, ze cut leg, and ze look of ze devil in hees gray eyes. And you ask, do I see heem!"

Skid asked, "You can prove it? He left his 'chute?"

"He burn eet, an' he go away along ze road. You not believe? I show you ashes of parachute fire. An' ze buckles from it, I have picked up for to make farm harness strong wiz. *Ah, oui, I can prove!*"

He did.

Skid sat in thought for long hours through the day, and after a restless night of suspense, he made cautious inquiries about.

No sign of "Carr's" return to life. No attempt by a second Skid Carter to walk back into his old life of undercover leader of Nazi Germany in Canada and the United States. For Skid had correctly estimated the man's station to be high.

"I'm elected," he saw it grimly. "The stinker has even stolen my good name, with everything else he has done! The point is—what will he do now? And what should I do?"

His eyes narrowed as he thought it all out, carefully. He jumped to his feet once when something occurred to him:

"I don't know the extent of his ring, here in Canada and the United States! If I did, I could smash it with one blow! One blow for the democracies, and for the dead-and-gone good name of Skid Carr!"

He blinked. "If I could get Tasche and Schenzer, either one of them, even! But they wouldn't talk, wouldn't give out on the others. No. There's only one way to smash Kurt and to smash Nazi power in this hemisphere. For all time! But I've got to move fast to do it!"

"Any preference where you'd like to serve, Captain Carter?" he was

asked, at R.A.F. Headquarters.

"In Germany," he answered simply. Then, with a grin at the man's start, "Well, we're headed there eventually, aren't we? Joke!"

"We can use you," he was told. "Instantly. You'll report to our Newfoundland base, and pilot a bomber over for the Ferry Command. After that, it's Germany-bound for you. I promise it!"

Skid said dryly, "I'll send you a postcard. *Via* Switzerland. I promise it!"

It was later that that official scratched his chin and murmured, "Did that blighter Carter *mean* that? Or was he pulling my leg?"

CHAPTER V

Without a Flag

LIGHT from flares made the fog-shrouded Newfoundland base eerie. The big Baltimore bomber crouched in the lee of the wet-slicked hangars, a grumbling monster with orange-red tongues of flame rippling from its exhausts. Nearby, Skid smoked a damp cigarette and eyed his crew—the two men who had just come back from leave to resume the job of piloting Britain's giant bombers across the dark Atlantic.

Moose Kelson and Bub Seemans—co-pilot, and radio operator who did double-duty as navigator. The commandant came close to Skid, followed by the other two.

"Carter? Your co-pilot, Kelson. And Seemans, Navigator."

"Glad to know you," Skid said flatly, thrusting out a hand. "You lads are old-timers at this, I hear?"

The man called Moose Kelson had a strange similarity to the animal he was named for, so ludicrous was his horse-face when he heard Skid's words. His eyes were round and glassy, his lower lip slack, and dis-

belief in his short laugh.

"How's that, Skid? Is this a gag? Glad to know me, huh! A nice cool way to greet a pal of *All-Canada Airways* days!" He squinted his eyes at Skid. "Going high-hat on us?"

Skid recovered himself with a start. "I—I was thinking about something, Kelson." He eyed the commandant. "Er—you know, sir. I was thinking about——" He shrugged his inability to go into details.

"Oh?" The commandant nodded quickly. "Carter has—something on his mind, Moose. Can't discuss it, you understand? But it was serious. You must forgive him his apparent not knowing you."

Kelson's eyes had gone hard. "Okay with me if Carter doesn't know me yet." He looked at Seemans. "We save money on the dry cleaner, huh, kid? I ain't had such a brushing-off since I tipped a guy at the Frontenac a buck!" He went toward the hatch of the plane, then turned and made a mock obeisance to Skid. "After you, Captain!"

Bub Seemans grinned and shuffled close, his shortness making an almost comic contrast to Moose's bulk. "After you, captain dear!"

Skid climbed into the huge ship and seated himself at the controls the grease-monkey vacated for him. They waved to the crew on the ground, and Skid twisted his head to meet Moose's stare.

"You take her up, huh? I'm—tired."

He eyed the more than one hundred dials of the instrument board with dazed gaze. Given a month—even two weeks—he would have been able to fake the job pretty well. Now——

"Well, spin my prop!" Moose drawled. "Darned if you aren't getting a bit human, after all, Carter! Imagine you letting a co-pilot think he is useful." He dropped his hand onto the throttle handles and said, "You sing out the patter. Okay?"

Skid stared. "What patter?"

Moose sat perfectly still a moment,

then shrugged. "Okay, Captain—I'll both question and answer myself! What are you riding—dead-head or something?"

He nudged the motors to a louder roar, and singsonged the ritual of pilot and co-pilot checking one another before a take-off to be sure that everything was all right.

"Oil temperature, 100! . . . Manifold pressure, thirty-five pounds! . . . Altimeter, at zero! . . . Tail-wheel, unlocked! . . . Landing-gear lock-bar, set! . . . Hatches, locked! . . . Navigations lights on! . . ." He eyed Skid puzzledly. "Safety-belts, on! . . . Control-tower signal—clear!"

The throttles went faster forward, and the motors picked up a lustier roar and the ship swung in a half-arc, then rumbled forward, lifted its tail to race, nosed down for swift scudding.

THE Baltimore was in the air, droning ahead at faster speed, rising into the gray void and leaving below the dim lights of the hidden field. Moose held to a gentle climb and grunted:

"Fight orders!"

Skid sighed with relief that he had those ready. He was glad that the dimness of the cabin hid his blush at the slip he made in not knowing what Moose had meant by "Sing the patter!" The veriest tyro at the transport game would have known that.

"Ten thousand! Course, twenty-two degrees, for one hour, airspeed of two-hundred-fifty! One hour, course of thirty-eight degrees!"

Moose reached forward and manipulated the gyro-pilot mechanism. He sat back, drew out a cigarette and lighted it without offering Skid one, and watched the instruments.

But Skid had a feeling that he, too, was being watched. He knew it when Moose turned his head and stared suspiciously at him.

"What?"

"Since you act co-pilot, suppose you

retract the landing-gear?" The man stared harder. "Or are we flying the Atlantic this way?"

Skid reached his hand down to the hydraulic-air retractor and fumbled for the valve. Finally, he shrugged and said, with a forced yawn. "You handle it, Moose. I'm not well. Feel sort of funny."

"You act it," Moose said harshly.

He touched just the right lever and the hiss of air moved sibilantly through the dark. The air-speed indicator moved forward, and the ship jumped through the dark faster.

There was a slight bump when the ship reached the ten thousand-foot level, and the gyro-pilot—"Iron Mike," in the parlance of the air—worked its magic with the controls. The ship was on course.

"You're a funny guy, Skid Carter!" Moose sighed. "Used to be I thought you were the most coldly efficient pilot ever I saw, and not such a hot guy to try and pal with. Now—darned if you don't act like a solo student; but even with that, I like you better than I ever did. And that isn't much!"

Skid waited a moment, then reached out and snapped the gyro-pilot off. He spoke into the cabin-phone:

"Bub Seemans? Got your belt on? Good! Mister Kelson wants me to show him how a solo-cadet would handle a bomber!"

Moose sat unblinking as Skid deftly lifted the ship into a wing-over, let it scream down in gathering speed, then executed a level-up slow-roll with the giant plane. A loop followed, and then a renversement. Then Skid became part of the ship as he deftly worked it through its paces with gentleness, yet with determined and perfect control.

"Okay, pal," Moose said, when the ship was back on course again, "I guess I can solo you, after that demonstration." He frowned. "Darned if I can remember a guy ever slow-rolling one of these buggies before!"

It was maybe an hour later that he

grudgingly offered Skid a cigarette. Somehow, Skid was glad. The small gesture meant something. He was going to ask a few questions about Moose's not having liked the old Skid Carter—Kurt von Kahr.

But he forgot it when the wind whipped up harder and he had to check and re-check with Bub Seemans on the course to be followed, changing it every little while as the navigator was able to get an observation and gauge a new wind-shift.

Finally, Moose Kelson said heavily, "Look. I thought you were nuts, when I came on the job. Now I think I'm nuts. Know why?"

Skid kept his eyes averted, sensing what was coming. "No."

"Darned if I think you *are* Skid Carter!" the big fellow said slowly. "I can't help it, pal. I just think something is—screwy!"

SKID thought long and earnestly, for some hours. The plane rode the clouds with the threnody of its motors laying a stilling influence over the men in that cabin.

From time to time, Seemans would 'phone his information to Skid. Later, for perhaps three hours, he had been walking forward with it, and standing to watch the instrument panel, and then look at Skid.

The American pilot had come to a decision, long since. He was alert to Seemans' puzzlement and was aware when Seemans started to change from watching him and watched Moose, instead. There was an exchange of some sort going between the two men.

Moose asked, almost casually, "You sure we're on the right course, Carter?"

"I'm making the course!" Skid said harshly. "Also, I'm captain. Or had you forgotten?"

Seemans, standing close behind, said, "I'm not forgetting we are at war with Germany, Skid—and that's where you are heading, with the way you are

navigating! Straight for Germany!"

Skid kept his voice cautiously casual. "Has it occurred to you. I may have secret orders? That Nazi raiders may be waiting in our old lane, and I'm to swing over closer to France?"

"Have you those orders?" Moose asked.

"You may assume I have," Skid said coldly.

"Spoken like Skid Carter," Moose jeered. "Bub? Get onto that radio and ask instructions! To hell with who hears, so long as our base does! There's something wrong here!"

Skid said, "Go ahead, Bub. And I'll call on you and Moose after the court-martial." His eyes blazed in the dim light when he snarled, "I'm in charge of this ship, and you'll take orders from me. The two of you!"

Moose scowled when Bub shrugged his impotence to do other than take orders. The ship droned on into the lightening gray of morning. It was shortly after that Skid made his last decision.

"Moose is wise that something is wrong. Let him start shooting his mouth off, and I'll be a goner before I can even get my plan working, before I can get anyone in England to trust me in what I propose to do. No. I'm on my own. Strictly! I've got to do this the way I see it."

He signalled Moose to take the controls, and he got pencil and paper from Seemans and started to write. The entire story. All of it. It began with names, dates, occurrences, that could be corroborated. They could check, and they would know that Skid Carr was very definitely alive.

Omaha. St. Louis. Little Rock. What the planter in Arkansas had said, what he—Skid—had done. The story of Skid Carter—of the man he knew to be Kurt von Kahr, and the man he knew to be alive. He finished, folded the document carefully, and put it in his pocket. At that moment, Bub Seemans walked up, his face drawn, his eyes hard.

"See that strip of land showing off there?" the navigator asked harshly. "Well, that's France. In about five minutes, when the sun is up a little higher, we'll be shot out of the sky like a clay pigeon in a target gallery. Carter——"

Skid was on his feet, then, and his automatic was in his hand. "I know mutiny when I see it!" he snarled. "Sit down here, Bub! And stay sitting. Here—hold this. In exactly three minutes, swing north and hit hard for England. Radio for interceptor help as you go. But until then, sit tight."

He passed the written document to Bub and added, "Read that *after* you land. Me, I'm going back here for a few minutes. But remember—if you so much as wiggle the twig, if you so much as stir the controls, I'll blast daylight right through you both!"

He backed carefully along the cabin until he had reached the equipment he sought. He stooped, unlashed the rubber life-raft, and had it at the hatch before Moose or Bub could make out what he was about. With a heave, he got the hatch open against the terrific wind-pressure, hurled the rubber thing out, and stepped calmly after it, reaching for the rip-cord ring.

His last recollection before he pulled the safety-handle was a wild yell from Moose Kelson.

THE Nazi patrol-boat roared into Calais under a full head of steam, and a round-eyed crowd of soldiers and sailors watched the burly, wet figure that climbed out under the guns of the patrol-boat crew with cold contempt flaring in his gray eyes.

A military policeman shouldered importantly through the crowd and planted himself commandingly before the rescued aviator. "*Ach*, another prize! Another English pig! Or is this an American dog?"

For answer, Skid acted as the true Prussian officer would be expected to act. He cursed in strident German,

shrilling his high identity and his mission, and then slapped his coarse interrogator in the face.

"Have a care how you speak in the presence of *Herr Kolonel Kurt von Kahr!*" he snarled, his face ugly. "Why, you swine, for a fig I'd have you horsewhipped and put on bread and water for a month! How dare you? I'm amazed that such a foul beast as yourself could be in our glorious armies. Where is your superior? I wish you to lead me to him at once. *Schnell, mein grosser dumkopf!*"

But it wasn't necessary. An officer was coming to the scene at a fast pace, attended by armed guards. He halted at sight of Kurt, came a faltering step closer, and with a twitch of his facial muscles popped a monocle from an eye to his hand, and thrust it into his pocket.

"*Kurt! Ach, Gott, Kurt von Kahr! Gott im Himmel, du bist Kurt von Kahr, jah?*" He shot a horrified glance around at the gawping soldiery. "*Achtung, achtung!*"

The streets resounded with the smartly clashed heels of thousands of boots, and Skid Carr bowed ceremonially to the officer, saluted the rigid men distantly, and smiled.

"It is a pleasure to be home," he said simply, wondering frantically who his deliverer was. A cavalryman, from his tunic markings. But also a friend of Kurt's, a close friend. Who? It was important. He had to know!

The officer beamed as they went along the street and said, "Imagine that it should be I—Hans Woldemann, your old school friend—who am the first to greet the returned hero! *Ach*, what luck!"

"Thank you, Hans," Skid said in good German. He felt easier.

But he didn't feel so easy three hours later, in the military transport speeding him to Berlin. He glanced around the luxurious cabin of the staff plane and eyed the swarming escort of Messerschmitt and Heinkel fight-

ers, and thought again of the words of Germany's Chief of Military Intelligence, over the long-distance telephone.

"What luck, that you escaped and returned when detected. What a great propaganda story for the radio and the press! I tell you, this will set Canada and America by the heels! The story of your return!"

Skid thought darkly, "It will also tip off one Kurt von Kahr, hiding out somewhere in Canada! I've got to block it. But how?"

He still didn't know, when the plane slid down for Templehofer Airdrome.

HERR KOLONEL KURT VON KAHR was resplendent in dress uniform, complete with medals. The dazed look he wore as he faced Germany's greatest leaders passed for becoming modesty in the fulsome light of such shining intellects.

Goebbels, the cunning Minister of Propaganda, sat hunched in a near chair, chin in hand, glittering eyes moodily on Skid's magnificent physique.

Goering, Chief of Air for Germany, was an obese bundle of gaudily conceived uniform: white serge, gold, red-stripe on the trousers, and a ribbon-counter of decorations over his left breast. And black boots.

Himmler, Chief of Secret Police, furtive, sly, silent, eyes studying Skid incessantly. It was this latter who said, "The *Herr Kolonel* should start a smashing offensive against the Russians to climax our Spring campaign for Moscow."

"I wish to lead my squadron on the English front for a short time," Skid said flatly. "Then back to Canada for me. My work is there, in the Western Hemisphere!"

"Rot!" Goebbels snarled. "Propaganda will win the war, not muscle!"

"I wish to go back to Canada!" Skid spoke louder, bringing his voice to higher pitch. "My work is there. I go there!"

Himmler gaped at Skid, twisted his gaze to the distracted Hitler, and grunted, "It is for us to say; not for you, *Herr Kolonel*."

"I go to Canada!" Skid shouted. It was part of his plan of desperation. He came to his feet, and now he had Hitler's full attention. "I must first relax—have some sport with the British airmen over the Channel, where already once they 'killed' me!"

He sobered again instantly. "My staff in Canada and America must be augmented, the old staff shifted, addresses changed, faces shuffled. It was a close call, that one in Canada. With my cousin—Carr, you know—causing me trouble.

"It is because of him I must change things. But he must not know I am here. I shall return to strike again. And this time, you will feel the results—all of you!" He meant this!

Goering asked, "You do not know if he still lives?"

"Ach, yes! But under the cloud which I threw upon his name, he will have a hard time to work! Meanwhile, we must work; but fast! We must shift our organization, and then I return to direct the finish!"

"You are that confident?" Hitler spoke for the first time.

"I promise you, my work will make itself felt even to you," Skid said soberly. "On my word! My word, *Herr Hitler*!"

The Fuehrer said somberly, "This man speaks with conviction! He has a vision! It shall be as he says." His eyes traveled the group. "You have heard my commands. *Herr Kolonel* von Kahr is to be given every assistance for which he asks!"

Outside, Goering said, "Your Death Head squadron now uses Messerschmitt One-elevens . . . Kurt. I doubt you can fly this ship!"

Skid murmured absently, "You should try crop dusting in Arkansas, fella! In an old crate of a Stearman with special doodads rigged onto it!"

"Hein? You say——"

Skid started. "I said, *perhaps*, Field Marshal! But I shall try my modest little to fly the new ship!"

CHAPTER VI

Suspicions

UNKNOWNING squadron mates watched the man they supposed to be von Kahr put the fast new fighter through its paces and were dubious for many minutes. But when the ship came gradually under Skid's control, and he worked himself out in maneuvers at new and blinding speeds and found himself getting the hang of it, they were all smiles and knowing nods.

When Skid landed, he found the dread Himmler on a puzzlingly mysterious visit to the field.

"Just a friendly call," he explained to Skid, but with eyes as friendly as a cobra's.

Skid shivered, despite himself. But it was just this had made him demand active duty with a fighter squadron: This danger of Germany's slyest intellects groping through their slimy suspicions even of one another. And it might result in Skid's undoing, if he didn't make himself scarce until he had what he had come after!

"Make yourself at home," he said, with a touch of gruff disdain. "I am a busy man, with many things to do!"

Himmler tugged at his chin. "This cousin of yours, *Herr Kolonel*. He resembles you—very closely?"

Skid forced a laugh. "*Ach*, not so much as one had hoped! In other days, yes. But, it was what led to my undoing. I tried to appear as himself, as *Herr Kirk Carr*, and it did not work with his close friends. *Ach*, it is unfortunate, but we are not now so alike. He wears a mustache of a type which I cannot grow!"

Himmler nodded, then gestured

with his head. "I have been waiting for you to use your eyes, *Herr Kolonel*! It is not right that a man of your romantic appearance should not think of romance. Not once did you go near your intended since you have returned!"

Skid's eyes widened in horror when he saw a blond beauty smiling in his direction from Himmler's own automobile. Even at the distance, he knew it to be Gretchen Muller.

The glue in his legs came unstuck at this evidence of Himmler's sly cunning, his thoughtfulness of this cousin who looked so like Kurt von Kahr, and the possibilities that lay behind it!

"You stumble, *Herr Kolonel*?"

"I stagger with weakness of delight!" Skid lied. "But—a fighting man has no right to think of romance."

"Nonsense!" Himmler's eyes glittered. "Surely, you are going to greet *Fraulein Muller*?"

Skid forced a smile, forced his legs to work, was somehow at that car; and then Gretchen was in his arms. And as suddenly the girl went taut under his kiss, eyes widening in wonder into his. Then:

"Oh, my dear!" she murmured, all smiles again. "My very own dear! I thought—oh, Kurt, I thought we never again would meet!"

"Gretch!" he murmured, and then stiffened. "Gretchen!" he murmured, correcting the telltale slip instantly—the slip of the word 'Gretch,' the name that only the American, Kirk Carr, had ever used with her.

The girl was standing back then, apparently lost in her admiration of the returned hero. "Dinner—tonight?" she asked. "Or if you are too busy—tomorrow?"

"Tomorrow night, with pleasure," Skid beamed. There was something else, too, and he blurted it out. "My—my—" He hesitated.

"*Frau von Kahr*, unfortunately, is ill at a friend's house in Austria, that was. You will see your mother? Soon?"

"Within the fortnight," Skid said, his breathing easier.

Himmler said, "*Ach!*" and smiled the very slightest. "It is all right, eh?"

"What is all right, *Herr Himmler?*" Skid asked coldly.

"That *Frau* Muller is so well, and so happy to greet you."

Skid said, "*That* is all right, yes. But I require the complete list of addresses of my agents in Canada and America so that I may recommend the changes desired!"

HE HELD his breath, his eyes intent on the man. This was the crisis, the climax. This was the purpose of his errand here in Germany, an errand that would have the grave for its reward if he failed. He had staked all for this, and here it was.

Himmler was sly again. "But your own list?"

"Destroyed. I had to do it! *Herr Himmler*, you must do as I say!"

"It can be forwarded by the—er—usual channel," the man evaded.

Skid snapped, "You have your Fuehrer's orders! I require that list!" Himmler glared, tried to face Skid down, but shrugged at last. "As you wish. But it will take a week."

"Tomorrow!"

"It will take five days."

"Three days!"

The dread chief of the Secret Police bowed his head in assent, saying dryly, "If all Germans were as impatient of delays—well, *auf weidersehen, Herr Kolonel*. For the time being—and until we meet again, eh?"

"In three days," Skid repeated woodenly, and turned to Gretchen. "And—tomorrow night, my dear!"

"You do such dangerous work," the girl murmured, watching Himmler's retreating back. "I—I am afraid for you." She shivered. "Oh, that horrible man, *Herr Himmler!*"

Skid said, "If only I could take you with me!"

Gretchen's eyes widened. "You go

away again?"

"Er—I mean, always I wish you could be with me," and he laughed.

She kissed him resoundingly before she left, to the intense amusement of Skid's squadron mates. Disturbed by the meeting more than he cared to admit even to himself, Skid said roughly, in perfect German:

"Death Head *Staffel*—we fly to a Channel port in preparation for duty tomorrow. All ready? To your ships and—*scramble!*"

In the air, he pinched his arm, and then his cheek, and looked back. No, he wasn't dreaming. This was no nightmare! He—Skid Carr, ex-crop duster and Commercial stick-wrangler from the U. S.—was leading a crack Nazi fighter outfit in a fast-speeding vee-of-vees!

* * * * *

The spotters picked them up shortly after dawn—the screaming echelon of Messerschmitts that rode high and close to sprays of flimsy cirrus clouds. Skid, at the peak of the flight, clipped the radio system alive and spoke to his men:

"Disregard that formation of Hurricanes flying to the east! We are after real game. Bombers coming home from raids!"

This was bald-faced humbug. Bombers riding home had swarms of escorting planes, would be flying much higher. But Skid wasn't going to tackle anything that he could avoid tackling. Let these others think what they would: That he wanted just to fly, this first day, that he was feeling out this new, fast ship, that he "had the wind up," even!

He had already concluded one hard thing with himself. If attacked, he would shoot only to ward off destruction. In a way, it was the fault of the British that he was in this fix. They wouldn't listen, wouldn't act.

But it was not the fault of these British pilots. He wasn't going to shoot one of them down if they had to get him instead. But there would

be some tall stick-wrestling before that came to pass.

Also, there was another thing. He had to get over England and had to do it fast. Only two days left, now.

ON OVER the Channel, they screamed, and then puffs of mushrooming white told that the Archies were in action. A particularly close and vicious blast rocked the plane, and shrapnel holes showed in the left wing. Skid zoomed for more space, zigzagged for a spell, straightened again.

In his pocket was a packet attached to a parachute fashioned the night before: A 'chute fashioned from a handkerchief. Flimsy, but it would do, if the wind didn't sail it into the waters about the tight little isle that is England.

It would do because that packet, addressed to one *Moose Kelson, Ferry Bomber Command*, contained nothing but a tiny map and a letter. A brief, but clear letter.

That letter was signed: "*Skid Carr.*"

Well inland, a swarm of Spitfires climbed to meet them. When the others of the squadron had their eyes peeled on the oncoming Britishers, Skid slid the hatch of his plane open and wafted the packet out, with a prayer on his lips.

Then he swung on a low-dug wing-tip and raced back. But it was too late to get away.

The British fighters had cut back, were even now intercepting the Nazi flight. Skid called into the miked system, his heart in his throat: "All right, lads—let's at 'em!"

The Archies signed off when their own ships hurtled in to take up the gage, and now the two flights raced close, guns spanging savagely; and then they swirled in the throes of a dog-fight.

Skid watched an Englishman climb slyly up on his tail, and threw him off by throttling back and treading

full right rudder and aileron. The startled Britisher swept past, and Skid absently did the right thing—wrong for him, in this case!—and cut back into line, squarely on the Spitfire's tail. Another Nazi sidled in for the kill, but Skid yelled him off, then tripped his guns.

Rat-tat-tat-tat-tat-tat-tat!

The tracers ate into the tip of the Britisher's wing, and the pilot went into a frantic spin. Skid followed long enough to make sure the man was faking the fall, then grinned and leveled again.

"That'll teach you not to be so damned careless!" he grunted. "Lucky limey!"

Above, a British ship wobbled out of a setto, canted high, and two Nazis followed it up, their lead tearing the ship to splinters. Skid growled.

"Oh, Lord, they got one! Poor guy!"

But off to the other side, two Nazis were falling; one, a flamer; the other, his tail surfaces shot or torn away.

"That sort of evens things up," Skid grunted. "And one extra for the limeys!"

He reached to click the mike alive and gasped his horror. It was already on! The talking he had been doing had been into the mike, into the ears of his mates in the Nazi Death Head Squadron!

"Break it up, men!" Skid announced in German. "Split—and hit for home! That will be all for now!"

As he went, he spotted a reckless Britisher trying to get at one of his men. Skid, knowing the others knew he saw, yanked hard over, came tearing in, splattered lead madly.

The Britisher pulled up wildly, yawed over hard, and went into a dive. Skid followed fast, to keep the man headed away from his squadron. *Rat-tat-tat-tat-tat.*

The Spitfire held the dive, its pilot cagily down for protection of the armor-plating of his seat. Skid grinned and pulled away.

HE couldn't help noticing the tension among the men, when they got down from their ships across the Channel. One, an exuberant youngster, ran up to Skid and cried:

"*Herr Kolonel*, the English were on our same frequency, *jah*? I am sure I heard their leader talking into my earphones! No?"

Skid looked quickly around. One of the older men was staring at him thoughtfully, a question in his eyes. Skid affected to be puzzled, too. It was another who said, with a laugh:

"*Gott*, but it is scary to hear English talked into your ears, during battle, no? But they must have heard us, also—and so they were as frightened as we!"

The tension was relieved in the laughter that followed.

"Did you see," the youngster cried. "The *Herr Kolonel* downed two, today! How splendid!"

"I go to see a—er—friend," Skid told his men, later, with a wink. "One of the beauties of flying is, you can commute home each day!"

"Give her my regards," said the man who had stared at Skid so quizzically. He spoke in good English. "Also, I happen to be flying your way."

"Thank you," Skid said evenly, also in English. "With pleasure!"

It was the impressionable youngster who came near him, before he took off, and whispered, "It is not true, *Herr Kolonel*, that the foul Himmler is spying on us German airmen? I heard it whispered that one of his spies is with us!"

Skid's heart tunked, but he forced a grin. "It's not me," he said, slapping the youth on the back. "Is it you?"

"*Ah, nein, Herr Kolonel! Nein!*" the youngster laughed back.

After dinner, Gretchen turned to Skid. "Shall we sit on the porch?" she asked. "Or are you afraid perhaps we might have a blackout?"

Skid grinned. "I'm afraid maybe we won't have a blackout." He winked at Herr Muller, a silent man who in

other days had been gay, pleasant, jolly. "Eh, sir? A blackout on the porch would be nice!"

The man tried to hide his grin behind a growl.

Gretchen looked at the moon, then at Skid. "You saw—*him*? In America? Your cousin?"

"Uh-huh," Skid said evenly. "We met."

"He is—alive?"

"Yes. Why? Do you care?"

Gretchen came close to him, pulled his arm about her. "Not now," she whispered. "Not now that I am so happy with you!"

Skid felt the evening go suddenly flat. She didn't care that he was alive. Somehow, however, he got over it as the moon waxed higher, and his romantic interest with it. But he was careful not to murmur that telltale "Gretch," as he had that first day!

There was a raid alarm after midnight.

"They come so often!" the girl whispered coming closer into his arms. "I am frightened!"

"I'll take you away from all this!" Skid vowed. "Far away!"

"To where?"

He started. "Maybe Italy," he said glibly. "Look—can you see the man and woman in the moon? They say they are kissing. I somehow can't ever make them out!"

"You look perhaps too far," the girl pouted. "*Ah! So! Better!*"

CHAPTER VII

Night Break

THERE was unutterable weariness of his elected task on Skid when he turned back from a dog-fight on what he hoped would be his last day in Nazi Germany.

It would have been so much easier if he could have stayed on the ground, instead of having to lead a crack gang

against the British themselves. But he had foreseen the risks that this involved.

Let two, or three friends come to that conclusion, let Skid be faced with meeting Kurt's mother—Skid's dead uncle's wife—

And suppose *Herr* Himmler proved to be difficult at the last moment? Suppose he were to turn up, on the third day, with an excuse? And with others to follow, while he waited for his men to contact the mainland of the Western Hemisphere?

There was always the chance that Kurt had reached a haven with Schenzer or Tasche or another; that even now he was trying to get through with the news that another masqueraded as himself, although Kurt could not know where.

Censorship had seen to that—at Skid's insistence. No announcements were made of the identities of Ferry Bomber Command pilots, now. But Skid Carter would be missed from his transport post and questions would be asked, answers assumed. He had to work fast!

So Skid had acted to circumvent Himmler in a way that had him busy most of the long night as well as leading his patrols during the day.

He had contacted a man in Military Intelligence, divining that Himmler's prying into the dangerous and important work would not be to their liking at the old Wilhelmstrasse. A carefully worded dig here, a whispered wise-crack there, parties with Military Intelligence men.

"I wonder, *mein freund*, should we take milk with our so-poor coffee? Perhaps *Herr* Himmler would not judge the cow which gave it to be Aryan!"

Laughter, then, from the Wilhelmstrasse lads, malicious amusement in their eyes, feigned sympathy when Skid whispered his displeasure with having to work with Himmler, to wait upon him, to have Himmler prying into things that were rightfully for

the Military.

"Ach, so! *Jah, Herr Kolonel Kurt!* But only part of a list can I give. Those in St. Louis—Chicago—New Orleans—Los Angeles—are my former men. Those names you shall have. Gladly!"

A quick leave-taking, then, and on to another man. More drinks—more dry, crackling wit, spontaneous, ready, laughing.

A chair breaks under one. "*Ach! Herr Himmler shall investigate this chair. It came from a non-Aryan tree perhaps!*"

Knowing grins from the Intelligence Service men. Ready ears when Skid whispered: "I would like to know——"

"Not a word of this to anyone! Not even in Wilhelmstrasse, Kurt!"

"Don't," was Skid's stock reply, "even tell your best friend!"

So he flew by day, compiled his lists by evenings and night, and when Himmler appeared on the third day with the excuse: "Not quite ready," Skid had to feign his fury.

"Tomorrow morning, without fail, you shall have my information!" he raged. "Or we shall see what the *Fuehrer* has to say!"

It was galling to jump the Channel with his patrols and to see under him the English soil that meant safety and re-establishment as Skid Carr.

HE was with Gretchen when Himmler's own Secret Police appeared. They were grimly courteous as are men who know something is up, but not what is up. The *Herr Kolonel* would accompany them? News of a very important sort had come from abroad!

Gretchen was frightened. "Oh, Kurt! I'm afraid. Promise you will send for me, if you are in trouble?"

"How could I be in trouble, Gretchen?" he laughed.

"You wouldn't be the first good German to be so, with Himmler!" she whispered through her kiss. "Prom-

ise, Kurt!"

Skid, on the way to Himmler's headquarters, thought idly: "The guy is being dramatic. He has decided he has to give me the list, and he is stringing it out as long as he can, and putting on a show with it!"

But he knew that was wrong when he entered Himmler's strongly guarded quarters and saw the grim-eyed, hard-faced men who squatted anxiously in front of a short-wave radio receiver, excitement in their tense poses.

Skid opened his mouth to speak after he saluted, but held it. The radio was gloating, in German:

"The plane passed over another of our undersea raiders an hour ago! British planes followed somewhat later! British sea patrols are combing the waters for sight of the escaped men, ready to shoot at them with powerful guns! But they are still on their way, our daring countrymen! Heil Hitler!"

"Very interesting, *hein?*" Himmler said. "Some Germans—identity unknown as yet—stole a British bomber from the Ferry Command in Newfoundland. They are on their way here across the Atlantic!"

Skid was stunned. "How long?" he asked.

"Only several hours, since we picked up the short-wave alarm the British sent out. But already our long-range bombers are hurrying to help, to escort them in safety to us, if it is humanly possible!"

Skid held his face steady, but he was thinking fast. "It's Kurt at those controls, sure as shooting! Maybe he worked a gag on them, passed himself off as me. Got by, somehow. And is on the way here!" He pondered. "It's eleven, now. He'll be here by daylight, if he doesn't hit head winds!"

"You are not elated, *Herr Kolonel?*"

"They have not yet landed!" Skid growled. He thought fast. "To my *staffel* shall go the honor of meeting

these men!" That would do it—get him into a plane, into the air, and headed for England!

"*Ach, yes!*" Himmler purred. "But you shall not lead them, *Herr Kolonel!* You and I have work to do! But we shall meet the glorious heroes when they land. You and I, and *Feld-marshal* Goering the *Fuehrer* himself, perhaps—although he is now on the Eastern Front on an inspection!"

Skid shrugged. Himmler was more than suspicious. He was determined that Skid would not hit the air until the authorities knew more. And Skid knew he would see to it that he didn't hit the air!

The American said coldly, "I am happy that you have at last decided to do some work, instead of putting me off longer. When do we start?"

"Tomorrow," Himmler snarled. "After that other ship lands, perhaps!"

IT WAS evening when the plane arrived. It had hit head winds, had been badly shot up, had been forced down in France. German telephone communications had been interrupted by a terrific British bombing attack.

Then the bomber was on its way again, with a swarming escort fighting off the determined British thrusts on this last lap of the daring break. Dusk was settling when the drone of hundreds of wide-opened motors flicked through the gathering shadows, and the myriad wing-lights of the swarming planes showed like so many fire-flies against the lowering clouds of a storm that was racing the daring escapees.

Military Police held back the wild crowds. People roared their thrill of the daring flight, were beaten back, trampled, punched, until they made room.

The battered Baltimore was now in plain view, was sliding down the sky lane, disdaining to circle of the field but coming directly in. The grease-

monkeys swarmed to meet it, helped the weary, embattled men inside to get the hatches open.

Skid swallowed hard when he saw, beneath the grime and blood and the weariness of one of those three men—Kurt von Kahr. It was in the set of his head, in his broad shoulders, in the imperious way he looked through his bleary eyes at those about him. But he did not look like the same Kurt Skid had last seen in that burning plane high over the Province of Quebec.

This man had been through much, had hidden like a hunted dog by day, had traveled at night, eating when and if he could; but working ever on toward a haven. Then it was the reckless hazard at getting a plane, at making a break for Germany and escape, there to lay new lines, plan new plans, hatch new horrors for America.

SKID saw the role he would have to play, and he stepped resolutely forward to do it when the guards—he knew them to be such—that Himmler had placed about him ringed him in from an escape to a ready ship.

"*Ach, Gott!*" he all but screamed, when the unaware Kurt walked over near him, talking rapidly and excitedly with his small group and the half-crazed men who surrounded him. "That man is an imposter! He is a spy! That man is my cousin, Kirk Carr, Skid Carr, the American!" He grabbed Himmler, jerked him close, and screamed: "Arrest him!"

Kurt stopped, stunned, evidently aware for the first time that Skid had got to Germany. His jaws were slack in amazement, and then a hard grin spread over his face. "My dear cousin!" he murmured. "How nice!"

It was Himmler himself who wrung his hands and moaned, "Who is which? Which is who? *Ach, du lieber!* Arrest them both!"

It was late night, and questions still flew thick and fast. The two men ac-

cused sat facing one another, Skid clean, coolly insolent, calm, as Kurt von Kahr would have been; and Kurt—weary, dishevelled, rage getting the better of him with Himmler's continued doubt, screaming his fury.

"I tell you I'm Kurt von Kahr!"

"And I tell you, I am Kurt von Kahr," Skid smiled coolly. The judges, a score of Secret Police and Intelligence men, squirmed. "What a preposterous hoax! Stealing a plane, indeed! A trumped-up play, with the connivance of the British, to get this Allied spy in our midst. But he did not know I was here, thought I was dead, in Quebec!"

Kurt raged when this made a telling score with the court. "Name our men in America!" he challenged Skid. "Name them! Who in Chicago?"

Skid quoted from memory the bits he had picked up from this and that Intelligence operative. Kurt's eyes were disbelieving. But he tried again.

"In Cincinnati!" he barked.

"Ah! Cincinnati?" Skid smiled, spoke, and the wonder grew. But now and again, Kurt would deal his yarn a blow and even things up again.

Then came the crusher, with Tasche handling it. "How did you find me in Ottawa?" he asked Skid coolly. "If you are Kurt von Kahr, you can answer that. Here! Write your answer, and the other will do also! I shall write the correct answer. Then we shall read them and judge!"

"Pah!" Skid bellowed, coming to his feet. "Enough of this farce! All night, it can go thus!"

He looked at his wrist watch covertly. He bent his head in an effort to listen. But his eyes were haggard when only the patter of the falling rain answered. He had to stall for time.

"Send for—my mother. *Frau von Kahr!*" he suggested.

"Too ill to travel, as you know," came Himmler's ready reply.

"Send for my fiancée. Surely, a woman would know her intended!"

Kurt, himself, was smiling now. "So be it!" he breathed, rubbing his hands together. "So be it! Send for *Fraulein Muller*!"

CHAPTER VIII

Glory Hop

DURING the interval, both men were carefully attired so that each looked exactly like the other. In dress uniform, they were—except for Kurt's natural weariness—identical. But there was that difference. Skid caught Himmler's eye, shrugged.

"As I said, the American is slightly different. *Nicht wahr?*"

And then the door opened, and Gretchen Muller was there, eyes wide, breath coming in faintly troubled catches. She came in the door, and with her something else came—a faint faraway drone that grew with each passing second. Some men came to their feet, and then the air-raid siren was screaming its fright, and nearby a bell clanged loudly.

Von Walther, Skid's successor in leading the squadron, bellowed into the mike system: "Death Head *Staf-fel*—scramble!"

Kurt looked away from Gretchen. "Shall we postpone this? While the enemy is beaten off?"

Skid smiled coldly. "While you escape, cousin? Ah, no!" He snapped at Himmler: "Watch that man closely. I'll hold you responsible!"

Himmler swore feelingly, then looked at Gretchen in the faint light that remained after the precautionary blackout. "Which man is the right one, *Fraulein Muller*? Careful! We must be sure!"

Gretchen looked at Kurt Von Kahr. "Kurt?" she faltered, coming a step closer.

Then she drew him a few feet away, spoke soft whispers into his ears, asking questions, receiving answers

blankly, asking more questions. Then she kissed him, stepped back, a puzzled look on her face. And then she was coming close to Skid.

"Kurt? You are—Kurt?"

For answer Skid smiled, took her in his arms, kissed her tenderly. It was all over now, he knew. The girl would know the difference, probably had her answer already from the whispered questioning she gave the real Kurt. The girl drew him, also, aside.

"Your name for me?" she whispered. "The name you called me, and that I always loved?"

Skid gulped, his eyes wide. Kurt snarled a savage something and tried to get at him. But he was restrained. The girl said, "Say it, so I shall know!" She smiled. "Be not afraid."

Skid held her close, whispered, "You mean, *Gretch?*"

"Ah! It is so. You are—you are——" She faced Himmler. "This is my man, *Herr Himmler*. I am sure of it!"

In the ensuing uproar when Kurt tried to break away, the girl whispered, "What are you to do now, beloved?"

"So you knew from the first!" Skid gasped.

He listened. In the growing roar of anti-aircraft the high scream of motors came closer and closer. Bombs let go with a terrific concussion, jittering the candles of the room.

"It is this raid I am waiting for. To escape!"

Then the English raiders burst over the field and laid a rattle of machine-gun fire into the inferno of other noises. The small building rocked, and a wall fell out, and shrapnel was flying with lethal hisses through the air.

Skid knocked Gretchen to one side, and when the lights snicked off entirely he led her cautiously over a pile of debris to the outside.

"**S**TOP them!" Kurt bellowed, from the wreckage. "Carr is

trying to escape with *Fraulein Muller*! He has tricked her. Put on a light, somebody!"

Skid roared, "I'll shoot the first man to put on a light! That advice is from one who wishes to show the way to the British!"

Someone else was at Skid's side, now. He peered, his hands ready to throttle the man. But it was the youngster, Schmidt, the impressionable lad of the *Staffel*. Skid whispered. "Your gun!"

The lad thrust it into his hand. "I do not know which you are," he whispered. "Nor do I care, now! All I know is, you are my type of man, my type of fighter. That other—he is cold, harsh, cruel!"

Skid, the gun in his hand, gave the kid a break. "I am the wrong one," he said simply. "The other is your man—Kurt von Kahr. Get out of this, and fast!"

"You are my man," the kid said simply. "With you I stay. I care not the consequences. Look! Look! Those flares! One of the planes is— is landing!"

Skid cursed the fool at the wheel of that great ship. Even if his mates were ringing him in a lead-throwing arc, he was a fool. The rain was slanting white streaks in the light of the flares, and the Messerschmitts above boiled in a raging swarm of impotent watchfulness, unable to fire without massacring the Nazis on the ground.

But he looked at Gretchen, made a gesture of farewell, and the girl smiled, shaking her head.

"I go also, Kirk. Your Gretch stays with you!"

The Nazi youth was white with strain. He smiled crookedly when he looked at Skid.

"It is odd that it should turn out so!" he whispered. "But it is written that it shall be! It has to be." He took the automatic from Skid's hand with a quick movement. "No, my friend! Be not afraid. I do not threaten you! You had best go. And

—Good luck!" He smiled sadly in the semi-light of the flares. "Glory, it is not for me."

Skid murmured, "That's where you're wrong. If I can get away, I can start my work. My work to make the world a better place to live in. If I get away, it will be because of you!"

He took Gretchen's arm and holding low, scudded out onto the dimly lit tarmac. The big bomber was settling closer and closer, was winking its lights, and Skid was answering—as he had arranged, in the letter he had dropped over the English countryside—as he ran. His pocket-flash winked twice, held a long dash, winked twice again.

A scream of rage split the dark behind him. "There he goes! To board that plane! Stop him! Stop him!"

Feet thudded in a quick sprint, and then a flat, smacking echo tripped those feet, the sound of an automatic speaking at close range.

Another flat smack, and then the staccato rattle of other gunfire breaking into it, avenging those deadly shots that took Kurt von Kahr out of the play. "Good luck!" came a final, sobbed farewell.

SKID made his legs move in the other direction. He had to, had to! He couldn't go back. The kid was gone, anyway. He worked the flash violently, was rewarded when the swiftly rolling bomber came to a braked halt, a hatch burst open, and anxious faces showed there.

"Who it is?" a man barked.

"Skid Carr, American pilot. And friend!"

"Hop it, you crop-dusting fool! And make it snappy! We're goin' places!"

"Moose Kelson! You dope!"

He lifted Gretchen up into waiting arms, followed after her, helped slam the hatch shut even as the great plane roared into a take-off, machine gun firing dead ahead, to the side, and from the blisters.

Kelson grinned at him coolly, ignoring the shattered cabin.

"No time for the patter, have we, pal?" he said.

"But can you release the hydraulic retractor-gear? My one arm is sort of shot up. Just a wee bit."

Skid could and did.

The swarm of English long-distance scout fighters picked them up at ten thousand feet. At twenty thousand, they were still climbing for it. Skid got into the heated Mae West after he had helped Gretchen with hers. At twenty-five thousand, they were safe from pursuit.

Skid sank down wearily alongside the girl and considered the job ahead.

It was hard, long, full of sacrifices. But they had a good start, with his information that would smash the Nazis in the Western Hemisphere. A very healthily good start toward a good finish.

The false mask had been shattered, and now for the first time in many long months, the true mask of glory was visible ahead in the wreckage of the Axis enslavement plans.

"And Skid Carr will be in the thick of it—by his right name!" he thought, with a grin. He looked at the girl beside him. "Hey! Come here! It's cold; and Moose can't see through that rear-view glass, anyway. It's busted!"



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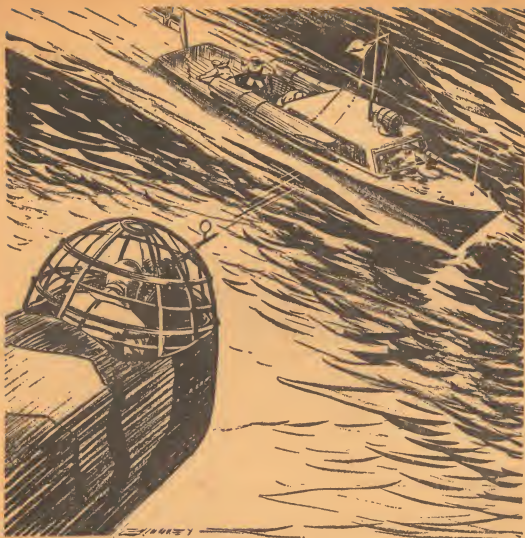
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Walker sprayed the E-boat unmercifully

THE MAN WHO HATED

By NORMAN A. DANIELS

*In Spite of Appearances, Lieutenant Brandon Backs
a Comrade's Play All the Way to the Jaws of Death!*

THE Whitley bomber, a huge dragon fly, camouflaged perfectly, flew at three thousand feet above the Channel on routine patrol. Its pencil-like body became almost invisible at times—when the sun was just right. Through the early dawn, Flight Lieutenant Mike Brandon, with an Irish name and an American background covering a full century, maneuvered the ship. Pilot Of-

ficer Walker yawned, removed the binoculars from his eyes and rubbed them slowly.

"This patrol work is the bunk," Mike Brandon said. "Even you are bored with it. We patrol from four A. M. until seven. Jerry usually stays in bed about that time, so all we get is the fresh air."

Walker laughed. "That's right, Yank, but if we're getting tired of it,

think of Eric Hoffman in the tail gun blister, watching for attack from the rear. Nobody to talk to—say, Yank . . . what do you really think of Eric?"

Mike gave his companion a quick glance. "I think he's one of the greatest guys in the R.A.F. Sure he's an Austrian, but even every German isn't a Nazi. They killed his father, tossed his mother into a concentration camp where she died in two months. All because somebody reported that they spoke a few words of criticism against Adolph. Eric managed to reach England and enlisted. He wants to do his share in beating down such a government. Don't worry about him. Intelligence made a pretty thorough investigation before he was accepted."

Walker nodded. "I hope so. Only it seems a little odd to be flying with an Austrian in our tail gun blister. He's rather fanatical about getting a crack at the Nazis, isn't he?"

"Uh huh," Mike said. "You'd better see what that is below us. Looks like a torpedo boat." The English pilot stared through his glasses, reporting. "It is a small craft—one of those we use to get raiding parties to Occupied France. And there are two Nazi E-boats right on its tail."

There was a click in Mike's ear as Eric Hoffman, in the tail blister, cut in his phone connection.

"Yank," he said briskly and with only a trace of accent, "Messerschmitt hundred and nine flying thousand feet below and behind us. We haven't been spotted because of the sun."

"Get set for action," Mike ordered. "We've discovered one of our raiding parties pursued by a couple of E-boats. We're going down and strafe them. We'll have to get that Messerschmitt first. If he's a thousand feet below, with all his attention on the boats, he'll never spot us. I'll dive in front of him. As we go by, give him the works, Eric. If you miss, I'll loop, but it will be slow in this big crate. Ready?"

"Ready, sir. Good luck," Eric's

voice came back. "And thanks for giving me first crack at the Messerschmitt."

Below, the E-boats were rapidly gaining on the fleeing raiding party. Guns were kicking up a fuss already and the Messerschmitt was getting set to dive and strafe the raiding party.

Mike went into a power dive. Wind howled like a million banshees against the descent of the big bomber. It was a risky business, this attacking a fleet little Messerschmitt, but the R.A.F. thrived on risks and Mike counted upon the element of surprise to give him an edge.

HE SPOTTED the Messerschmitt, flashed past her before the lone pilot even knew of the Whitley's existence. Mike felt the big plane rumble as Eric cut loose with his guns. But Mike's speed was too great. The Messerschmitt wobbled as steel ripped through her, but no vulnerable spot was damaged.

The Nazi went into a loop. Mike leveled off, holding his breath and praying the Jerry wasn't already diving at them. Walker was peering upward through the glass cowlings and calmly reporting.

"He's coming out of the loop, sir—getting set to dive."

Mike's jaws clamped shut hard. One glance below showed the E-boats closing in faster than ever. Something must have happened to the raiding party's craft. Whatever he must do had to be accomplished very promptly.

The next move called for strategy. Mike signaled Walker to man the forward guns. The Messerschmitt came down, diving straight at its prey with all guns squirting poison. Mike juggled the throttle and a stream of black smoke emanated from the exhaust. He nosed down, like a stricken bird in its last flight.

The Messerschmitt did exactly what Mike hoped. The pilot, believing his prey finished, was coming in closer to make a good job of it—and

holding his fire, too. He flew a half-ring around the descending Whitley and then prepared for the final touch. At that moment all hell burst loose from the big bomber. Eric, in the tail threw steel at it. Walker, with his terrific fire power, nailed the Messerschmitt cold. She literally blew to pieces in midair.

Mike leveled off. "Nice going, Eric," he said into the phone and then cut the connection. "The same goes for you, Walker," he added. "Now we'll scoot down and take care of those E-boats."

He roared toward the sea. Those aboard the E-boats had witnessed the sky battle and were now throwing up as much muck as their machine-guns could handle. Mike banked sharply and Walker let go with the forward guns. He sprayed one E-boat unmercifully and it began to weave madly through the water. But it didn't sink. Mike grimaced, those little boats were well protected. This called for bombs.

He cut in on Partain, the bombardier, signaled him to stand ready, and then leveled off for precision bombing. He felt the plane lift slightly as the first five-hundred-pounder plummeted to the sea. It was hardly possible to hit one of those small craft directly, but if the bomb exploded within a reasonable distance, the E-boat was done for.

A huge torrent of water rose up and the E-boat disappeared. When the confusion subsided, it was completely lost from sight. The second E-boat made a short arc and headed back for home. Undoubtedly her radio was wildly clamoring for help, and within the next ten minutes the sky would be alive with Messerschmitts. Mike wanted no swarm of those stinging wasps, not while he was operating this much slower bombing plane. Yet he hated to let that E-boat make a getaway.

He roared above it, circled and came back for a head-on attack. As he dived,

Walker started the forward guns going again. The boat crew ducked for cover. After the forward end of the Whitley passed by, Eric Hoffman took up the refrain and sent some more snarling death from his rear guns. There was no more anti-aircraft fire. Mike banked quickly, dived and leveled off. Once more the plane seemed to have hit an updraft as the second five-hundred-pound bomb was released. It was even a closer hit than the first.

Eric's voice cut in. "Time to leave, Yank. They're coming for us from the coast."

MIKE grinned tightly, cut in on his radio and reported the oncoming Nazi offensive squadron. Spitfires and Hurricanes would take off promptly to engage them. The raiding party below was under way again at top speed. Mike could see the tiny figures on deck waving their thanks. He streaked for his base then, met the British squadrons on their way out and knew the raiding party was safe.

He set his ship down gently, hopped out and waited for Eric to appear. It took a little more time for the rear gunner to wriggle through the aluminum inner structure of the plane. Eric jumped out, grinning broadly. He was blond, clearly Teutonic, but he could smile and that alone was an indication of his non-membership to the Nazi regime.

"A little fun this morning, eh, Yank?" he said. Then his smile died away and a cold light of fury entered his eyes. "I only hope that some of those who killed my parents were in the boats. It is too much to hope, but it does me good to consider it. Now we have breakfast."

"Let's take a car and go down to the shore," Mike suggested instead. "I'd like to talk to that raiding party. How about it?"

Walker was hungry and Partain shook his head for the same reason,

but Eric was more than willing to go.

"They may have brought back prisoners," he said. "I might find someone who can give me information about certain people I would like to meet some day."

They reached the coast just after the raiding party had docked. Eric grimly surveyed the four Nazi prisoners, but recognized none of them. They were a motley lot, sullen, scared and obviously astounded at the audacity of the party which had brought them back.

Mike went over to the sergeant in charge of the group.

"You birds have all the fun," he said. "I'm Brandon—pilot of the Whitley which was lucky enough to see your trouble."

The sergeant wrung Mike's hand. "If it hadn't been for you, we'd all be at the bottom of the channel. It was a good party, too, sir. But you should



have seen us over on the other side. We sneaked up on land, grabbed these four Heinies who got in the way and then tackled a whole barracks of the blokes. Let 'em have it from machine-guns. It's great sport—these private invasions."

Mike grinned. "I wouldn't mind going along myself some night. Too bad I can't. Anyway, I'm glad of the opportunity to help you boys."

With Eric he returned to the flying field. The Austrian was strangely quiet most of the way. Then, as they topped a rise and saw giant oak trees with a border of green shrubs covering a vast area of ground, he sighed.

"Very clever, Yank, the way that airport is hidden. No men would believe big Whitley bombers could be hidden there. Yank, I have been wanting to ask you a question. Will

you tell me the truth?"

"Sure," Mike responded. "What is it?"

Eric looked glum. "It is about my Austrian blood. Some people suspect I might even be a spy—that my story is a lie. You do not believe so, do you, Yank?"

Mike laughed. "Hardly—after what I've seen you do to Messerschmitts and E-boats. It may seem an odd arrangement—you fighting your own countrymen, but if it wasn't all right, Intelligence would have had you in a prison camp long ago."

"Yes—of course they would," agreed the gloomy young Austrian. "But I cannot stand this awful suspicion which some of the men have of me. You know I would willingly give my life to inflict damage upon those Nazi beasts!"

"I do," Mike answered. "Pay no attention to those who suspect you. We'll show 'em before this fracas is over. Forget all that. We've got to eat, rest and be ready for action to-night."

BUT there was no action for them until the hour of their routine patrol. Another raiding party had set out for France and Mike received orders to watch for them in the dawn. They had just taken off when they got a radio message which made Mike close his eyes and groan.

"Bomber Station calling. Raiding party overdue from French Coast. Your maps show position X. They landed there—a desolate spot. Craft must be beached at X. Your mission is to destroy it so the enemy will not confiscate craft. All hope for landing party abandoned."

Walker at the controls, chewed his lower lip. "But supposing they were just delayed?" he argued. "If we sink their boat, then what? They'll really get caught."

Mike nodded grimly. "Orders are orders. If Staff says the landing party is lost, then they must be. Take

a look at the map, Walker, and bring us to point X while I tell the bombardier to stand by."

It was gray dawn when they spotted the small craft, in ideal place for the raiders to have beached it. But what had gone wrong? Walker sent the Whitley very low and a single bomb crashed down beside the speed boat. The little craft converted into a million pieces of debris as the bomber sought altitude.

"Yank!" Eric called from the rear blister. "Yank—I can see them! The raiding party—running toward the beach—Nazis after them. They are shooting."

"Turn back," Mike ordered Walker. "Hurry! The raiding party is okay. We've got to help them."

"But it's enemy territory. They'll have Messerschmitts after us in droves," Walker protested feebly as he obeyed the order.

The raiding party, a dozen men in all, were scampering toward the beach where they'd left their boat. Two of them formed a rear guard and spread machine-gun death at the pursuing Nazis. They didn't have a chance. Their only method of escape gone and with about four million Germans behind them, only a prison camp or death remained. Mike felt responsible for their predicament. He knew the entire bomber crew wanted to help, if they could.

Taking over the controls, he zoomed down and the guns went into action. The Nazis dropped in their tracks. Those who could, wriggled for cover. The British raiding party had now seen the ruins of their boat, made a quick decision and were rushing for hiding places inland while the Whitley kept their pursuers back. It was over in five minutes, and Mike streaked for home again.

His face was ashen, his knuckles gleamed as he bunched fingers into fists.

"We were just a minute or two ahead of them," he muttered. "If they

die, it's my fault. I should have waited."

"But you had your orders from Bomber Control. You're not to blame," Walker argued.

"Those poor devils," Mike went on. "Trapped like rats. After what's happened, the Germans won't take them prisoners. They'll all be killed."

"Be reasonable," Walker protested again. "We gave them a chance to hide. Maybe tonight they'll send over a larger squad to rescue them."

"Don't you think Jerry realizes that, too?" Mike asked. "They'll patrol that section of coast like they do Berchtesgarden. Take over. I want to talk with Eric."

H E GOT the rear gunner on the phone. "You saw what happened, Eric?"

"Yes," Hoffmann answered hoarsely. "Listen to me, Yank. Those men have just one chance. They'll hide out until night. I know that section of France. There's a gully about two miles east—perfect for them to take refuge in. They're bound to head to that spot."

"Yes, of course," Mike concurred. "They have maps and must know of it, but—"

"Patrols couldn't reach them," Eric went on tersely. "But a man could parachute down after dark, instruct those poor devils to slip over to a level section of ground, and more planes could come over and pick them up. It's the only way."

"And what a way!" Mike said, and then he chuckled softly. "It might work with two men—especially if one of the two can speak German fluently. If you want an answer to that proposition, I give it now. Yes, we'll both go."

Walker had overheard it all. He chimed in with, "Count me in, too. Remember the beach there? I could sit down, after I strafed the German patrols to pieces. If you have the stranded raiding party ready, we'd

save most of them, anyway. You can't let Wing know about this because they'd refuse permission, but we might wangle a flight early tonight without telling our reasons."

"That makes it unanimous," called in Partain over his phone.

"Good," Mike said. "I knew you wouldn't have to be asked. We'll rustle up grenades and guns. It's got to work."

"Yes, sir," Walker answered, cutting off his phones and speaking only to Brandon, "but I was just thinking. Eric seemed almost too eager to suggest this. You don't think—"

"Nonsense," Mike snapped. "The only reason he'd go back to Germany would be to take a whack at those he hates."

It was after midnight when Mike and Eric examined their chutes, strapped submachine-guns and two bags of grenades to their bodies and



stepped toward the door of the Whiteley. Eric took along one other thing—a roll of steel wire. He patted this and smiled without mirth.

"Just in case we meet someone I know," he explained. "The wire is silent as it works. I am ready!"

Their chutes were black and invisible. Neither had much fear they'd be spotted on the way down and they had carefully picked out a good place, where there was only a sparse growth of low shrubs to hamper them as they contacted the earth.

Mike went first. He'd taken jumps before, but his heart seemed to stop beating for those precious seconds before he pulled the rip cord. Then the silk blossomed beautifully and Mike just hung there, slowly turning and almost enjoying the buoyant sensa-

tion before the ground came up to meet him.

He dropped to his knees, quickly pulled the chute down and collapsed it expertly. He looked around. Eric was landing about fifty yards to his left.

MIKE unbuckled his harness, rapidly folded it into the chute and carried the whole business over to where Eric was similarly engaged. They found a place to conceal the parachutes, carefully covered them and stopped to adjust their bearings and take stock of the grenades, submachine-guns and side arms.

Eric said, thoughtfully, "Here we are on enemy soil—liable to be shot on sight—fighting a battle for Great Britain. I, an Austrian of blood kin to those the British fight, and you—an American. I guess that proves something or other, though I'm not sure what."

"It proves men can't be classed by nationalities, religions or anything else. That Nazi doctrines are all wrong and that men are men—not machines. Let's slide under this bush, study our maps and get going. Those raiders must be in an awful stew by now, wondering how long before the Germans will land them."

They used a tiny pocket torch, well shielded in their cupped hands. The map gave details and distances. They set off, trudging through the night across the fields, never knowing when they'd run into an enemy patrol.

"If the raiding party has been spotted," Mike began calculating, "it will be surrounded, and that spoils our whole theory of helping them. They must be in the gully because it's the best and safest place to hide. We've got to get them out of there, across about three miles of this country to the airfield. Walker will go on regular patrol at four in the morning. He'll come straight here, rather than to the open beach, and try to land so we can climb aboard. A risky business,

Eric, but worth the try."

They kept walking, staying close to the line of trees whose dark shadows hid them well. Twice motorcycle dispatch riders hurtled over the narrow road which ran alongside their course, but other than that they saw no signs of the enemy.

Eric touched Mike's arm and they stopped. He spoke very softly.

"Look to the left. That long, low building It is an ammunition dump—the objective of those raiders last night They never made it. Yank, a million dollars' worth of ammunition is stored there. See how well hidden it is, except from this particular spot. They felt safe in placing it so close to the Channel because of that camouflage. No danger of it being shelled, either, this far north. Clever."

They became aware of lights far in the distance, the bluish headlamps of a car. Mike gave a grunt.

"If we could grab a military car, keep it hidden until time for Walker to show, we'd have a better chance. What do you say, Eric?"

Eric nodded and they began running, cutting directly across the field until they reached the narrow road. Eric quickly unshouldered the coil of steel wire, twisted one end around a tree and unreeled it across the road to another tree. It was low, invisible, and a car would have trouble getting past it. They unlimbered the sub-machine-guns and laid out a pair of grenades on the grass beside them.

THE car came rolling along at a moderate clip, but they were unable to see the occupants. Then the machine hit the wire and bounced back by the spring of it. The rear wheels went off the road and the motor stalled.

Like two dark imps, the Austrian and the Yank arose and leaped toward the car. There was a dazed driver and one man in it. The driver staggered out, drawing at a holstered gun as he did so. Mike slugged him across

the face and then squarely upon the head, dropping him without a sound. Eric dived into the tonneau of the open car. His prey was a slender, snarling German colonel with the insignia of the Gestapo on his uniform. He grabbed the colonel and hauled him out. The officer tried to raise a gun, and there was a short scuffle.

The pair reeled in front of the headlamps, and the German saw his adversary's features.

"Eric—Eric Hoffmann!" he gurgled.

Eric uttered a stifled sort of cry. Then he redoubled his efforts, and the two of them rolled into the ditch before Mike could reach them. In a moment it was over. When Eric arose, his features had lost some of their deeply etched hatred.

"I am sorry," he said softly to Mike, "but it was very necessary. The colonel was named Behmer. He was in command of the Gestapo when—when my father and mother were taken. I had to kill him."

"It's all right," Mike grunted. "We still have the chauffeur to take care of."

"Tie him up with the wire," Eric said. "We'll gag him well and hide him somewhere deep in the forest where he won't be found before morning. By that time we shall either be safe, or we won't care if he is found. I'll search the dispatch case Colonel Behmer carried."

When Mike returned from his task of hiding and silencing the driver, he found Eric fully dressed in Colonel Behmer's uniform which fitted him rather tightly.

"You do not have to come with me if you do not wish," Eric said. "Remember that when you get out of your British uniform it means a firing squad if we are caught."

"I'll string along," Mike said. "What's the angle, Eric?"

"We have been in luck. Colonel Behmer was on his way to the very camp from which the soldiers search-

ing for our raiding party operate. Behmer was to take command temporarily until the raiders are wiped out. There have been too many raids lately and the High Command wishes to show its disapproval and authority. I can pass as Behmer because, from the documents he carries, it is clear he is not known here. You can bet by as my chauffeur. In that subordinate position it will be unnecessary for you to speak much. You know enough German words to get by."

Mike swiftly changed to the chauffeur's uniform. They hid their guns beside the road where it would be easy to find them in a hurry. The sheer audaciousness of Eric's scheme almost insured its success. Mike studied the letters and identification papers. Eric was right—this was a set-up of the first order.

He moved his cap to a jaunty angle, clicked his boots and saluted.

"Ja, Herr Colonel. Brother, you wear that uniform as though you were born to it."

Eric smiled. "My rank in the old Austrian army was that of a major. Now there is no time to talk. We must hurry. Here we go—to life or death. The next four hours will tell the story."

MIKE drove, sitting very straight behind the wheel. They had proceeded about a mile when a barricade made him jam on the brakes. Six armed soldiers came out of the darkness, rifles held ready. Eric stood erect in the tonneau of the open car. The soldiers turned a light on him, froze to attention and a sergeant made a curt apology.

Eric barked something in German and then waved for Mike to go ahead. The barricade was removed quickly and they soon saw the masked lights of the army command headquarters. Mike rolled to a stop in front of the building. Two sentries came to present arms and stayed that way just as long as Eric was in their sight.

Mike remained behind the wheel.

A German major came hurrying out of the building. He glanced at Eric's Gestapo uniform and came to attention. They shook hands stiffly after exchanging salutes. Eric coolly handed over the papers he'd taken from the real Colonel Behmer.

"So you have come to direct the search for those Englander dogs." The major tried hard to conceal his rage. There was little love lost between the military staff and the Gestapo. "Very well. I hope you are luckier than I, Herr Colonel. Those raiding parties come equipped with maps which show prearranged hiding places. One group almost reached the ammunition dump last night, but we have them now—pocketed in one of the gullies. Some have been shot already."

"What?" Eric roared in proper authority. "You fool, they are to be taken alive. What good are dead prisoners? We must know exactly what goes on in Britain, and these men can tell us."

The major shrugged. "Perhaps, Herr Colonel, but you evidently have not had much experience with *Englanders*. Nothing makes them talk."

"Nothing?" Eric smiled sarcastically. "Major, we have had considerable experience with people braver than the British—our own kind who turned traitor to the Party. They were prevailed on to talk. These *Englanders* will also talk, now that I am in command of the situation. Give me twenty men, armed with tear gas grenades and pistols. Assign to my patrol a sub-lieutenant who knows where the enemy is hidden. I shall show you exactly how to capture men in such a good state of health that they can be properly treated if they do not wish to talk. That is all, Major. Thank you."

When Eric returned to the car, there was a fine film of sweat on his forehead. He wiped this off unobtrusively, put one foot on the running board as if

to dust off his boots and spoke in a soft voice.

"I have the major well in hand. In a few moments we will lead a patrol to where the raiding party is hidden. I shall give you orders in German to tie a white flag onto a stick. You are to carry it into the gulley with a flashlight shining upon it. Presumably you are going to ask the enemy to surrender. Tell them that when the gas bombs break to cover their faces and run for this car. Be sure to park it as far down the road as possible."

Mike gave no indication that he heard. Eric climbed into the tonneau and sat down primly.

Mike was worried. He understood nothing of what Eric told the major, and the man had fallen for the spiel almost too fast. Was Eric really still tied to German soil by invisible strands that would now compel him to trick Mike and the raiding party holed up in that gulley? Mike wondered if, for once, he'd overstepped his own confidence in a man.

He hadn't actually seen Eric kill Colonel Behmer. Perhaps the whole thing had been a set-up. Perhaps Eric planned to draw an armada of planes or torpedo boats across the channel where they'd fall into a trap.

A SERGEANT walked past, came to attention when Eric barked at him and pivoted to face his superior. Eric spoke in German again. Mike understood just enough to comprehend that Eric was asking about radio. Mike shivered. Radio would be included in the formation of such a trap. Eric had even suggested the whole plan, and it was working perfectly—too perfectly.

Then a squad marched up to the car. Eric addressed the lieutenant in charge, got out of the car and snapped a command to Mike. He got out, too, stood before Eric at stiff attention and listened to orders he didn't understand. But the Germans did and the lieutenant snapped a quick salute. Two

big transport trucks rolled up and the men piled into them.

Eric walked over to a section of camouflage composed of branches. He ripped one long branch off, tied a white handkerchief to it and called for a flashlight. A soldier brought one quickly. Eric faced Mike and spouted German for three minutes. This was the speech Mike was supposed to understand.

He saluted, bowed stiffly and said, "*Ja, Herr Colonel.*"

Then he took the flag of truce and the flash. A private drove the car now.

Nobody said much during the ride to the spot where the raiders were hemmed in.

Four minutes later Mike was stumbling across the uneven slope, flag raised high and flashlight bringing it into bold relief. He kept going until suddenly his arms were seized and a gun placed against his back.

"All right, mate," someone hissed. "You came 'ere to talk, so say yer little piece and then go back and tell 'em the answer is 'No.'"

"Where is your commanding officer?" Mike said slowly. "I'm Flight Lieutenant Mike Brandon of the R.A.F. I'm here to get you chaps out of this spot."

"Wot a story 'e tells!" One of the men laughed. "But we'll take 'im to the lieutenant so all of us can larf. 'E's Flight Lieutenant Mike Brandon, 'e says. Haw!"

But the commander of the raiding squad not only believed Mike; he recognized him. The surviving seven members of the imperiled detail gathered around.

"We've a friend up on that knoll," Mike said tersely. "In a few moments tear gas and smoke will be thrown. Get ready to cover your faces. Better wet handkerchiefs in the brook. When I give the word, follow me. Is that clear?"

"Beggin' your pardon, sir," a corporal asked as he stepped closer,

"have we got 'arf a chance of gettin' through, sir?"

"I don't know," Mike admitted frankly. "A lot depends on the luck that goes with us. Look—the first gas grenades! Soak your handkerchiefs and then come along. Hurry!"

They plowed through the tear gas and smoke. Somehow the guards that should have been at the left flank of the gully were missing. In a few minutes Mike saw the staff car ready and waiting for them.

There was a lone man standing beside it—Eric.

"Don't shoot," Mike warned his party. "That man is one of us." Under his breath he added, "I hope!"

Eric said fast, "I pretended to lead a squad down after you and slipped away from them in the smoke," Eric spoke rapidly. "Now here's the new plan. Drive that car to the air field. You know where it is, Mike. I've arranged for a Dornier reconnaissance bomber to be waiting. It has room enough for all of you. They think I'm going to take you to Berlin in it as prisoners.

"Drive right up beside it. Shoot if necessary. They'll be after you as soon as you take off, but I've arranged for that, too. Pile in everybody. That major was getting suspicious of me. He's checking up by now, and once they find out the truth, we're licked."

MIKE got behind the wheel. Eric clung to the running-board and kept his lips close to Mike's ear.

"Quite a party, isn't it? I know you, Mike, will fully appreciate what I'm going."

"I do," Mike answered, wondering if he really did. "But what are you going to be doing? Aren't you coming along?"

Eric let go with one hand and trust a folded note at Mike.

"After you take off," he said grimly, "read this and obey the orders. Now drop me around the next bend."

"But aren't you coming with us?" Mike gasped.

"I've made certain arrangements," Eric said stonily. "Don't ask questions. Slow up a bit so I won't break my fool neck. And, Mike—this is good-by. I wouldn't exchange places with any man in the world at this moment. Remember that. The one man who caused me to burst with hatred for all that Hitler represents is dead. It was a just fate that brought us together tonight, and now I am satisfied. Slow up—please, Yank."

Mike obeyed because he didn't know what else to do. Eric jumped off, rolled over a couple of times and then started running toward the forest at the base of a bluff.

Mike stepped on the accelerator. This whole plan was likely to fall apart at any moment now. He spotted the airfield with its camouflaging cover, drove madly across the field as he saw the big Dornier waiting. Only one man stood beside it and he never did know what happened, Mike slugged him so fast.

The men piled into the big plane. Mike made his way forward to the controls, his heart in his mouth. But the starter worked perfectly, and he was streaking across the field in half a minute. Even the motors had already been warmed up.

As he took off, men came racing out of the barracks just as the Dornier took off. Cars roared below them and guns began to sputter. Messerschmitts, capable of catching this slow Dornier in five minutes, were rolled out and prepared to take off. Mike groaned. Was this the culmination of Eric's trick? Had he turned back at last to the call of blood after his personal hatred had been satisfied?

Suddenly the plane lifted a bit. Fifteen seconds later there was a terrific explosion on the field below. A sergeant crawled up to Mike.

"Lieutenant Wakefield found the bomb racks full, so he figured he might as well strafe them before those Mes-

serschmitts knock us down," he reported.

Mike didn't reply. Something was diving straight down across his line of vision. It was a Hurricane, all guns squirting death. Others came down. The whole sky seemed filled with them. Mike spiraled the slow plane about, gaining altitude as he looked down at the huge, well hidden munitions dump.

There was a strong moon now. It had just appeared low in the sky. Silhouetted against it, standing at the very top of the bluff above the ammunition dump, was a solitary figure. Mike grabbed glasses. The figure seemed to understand he'd do that. It was Eric, and he waved both hands. Then he began hurling things. Grenades!

Big ones that ripped through the camouflage covering. Eric was firing the ammunition dump!

SUDDENLY the sky was filled with a vast roaring of sound and fury. The bomber bucked in the violent gale and Mike fought it. The whole top of the bluff disappeared—as Eric must have known it would.

Mike banked, came back over the spot and yelled for bombs to finish the job. They plummeted down. Weird flashes of light and more explosions re-

sulted. Mike dipped his wings in a salute to the dead, rubbed the back of his hand against his eyes and pointed the nose of his ship homeward.

In a moment he was surrounded by a flight of Hurricanes, the most comforting sight he'd seen in his life.

Eric had evened things up at the sacrifice of his own life. He'd evidently got to the radio somehow while Mike was making his slow way down the gulley. He'd contracted Britain and told the whole story.

No wonder the German Major had got suspicious.

Mike remembered the note Eric had given him. He fumbled in his pocket, got it out and held it beneath one of the control board lights. It was brief and yet it brought the tears to the American's eyes.

Dear Old Mike: You were one of the few who believed in me. I saw my chance when the patrol disappeared. That is why I suggested all this. If I have helped you and Britain, there is one thing I ask in return. When the day comes—drop a thousand-pounder upon the Wilhelmstrasse. Drop two more of them on the vulture's nest at Berchtesgaden. Good-by—and thanks for memories that live beyond death.

A sob threatened to close Mike's throat.

"You bet I'll do that, partner," he whispered. "If I live."

Next Issue: CAPTAIN DANGER'S BATTLE CRY, a Zooming Action Novelet by LIEUT. SCOTT MORGAN

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CAPTAIN DANGER



A Complete Sky Action Novelet

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CHAPTER I

Dive Bomber

THERE were tiny specks on the wide Macassar Strait far below, dozens of specks. In the air, were eight new Vultee V-12 dive bombers and—Captain Allan Danger. They flew in V-formation, Captain Danger leading them.

He saw those ships far below and knew what they were. The United

Nations had lost a lot of territory in the South Seas, but they had also acquired a host of clever agents who passed the word along. Danger had known about this transport fleet for hours. He brought the mouthpiece of his radio into position.

"Captain Danger, calling squadron. Flotilla of Japs below. Ready, boys. Change to echelon formation and take your lead from me."

Eager assents reached his ears, and he grinned. It was nice to be working

OVER MACASSAR STRAIT

The plane burst into flame. Danger saw Jap soldiers running toward them



The Great Yank Fighter, Back in the Uniform of His Own Country, Meets the Japs in Person—and Makes Them Say "So Velly Sorry"!

with Americans again, with boys who were as eager and as talented as any the British could offer. It was nice, too, to be wearing the uniform of the United States Army once more.

During his months of warfare against the Nazis and the Fascists in Europe, Africa and Crete, Captain Danger had missed that uniform. It had always been an integral part of him. He'd come home fast when the United States was handbagged by the Japs.

A born adventurer, Captain Danger loved nothing better than a fight in the sky. There were few fliers who could beat him at this game. He knew all the tricks and was a seasoned veteran.

The planes flew closer together, got above their target, and Captain Danger peeled off. He braced himself, let the wing brakes alone and dived at full speed. He began using the brakes a bit though as the water came surging up toward him.

Guns from the ships below began to play tag with him, but the meteor speed with which he cut through the heavens made him an elusive target. There'd be a stream of steel to dive through though. The Jap gunners would concentrate on his route of descent. If a lucky bullet found its mark, the Vultee would disintegrate. Captain Danger knew just what would happen at this rate of speed.

The targets grew rapidly in size. Danger raised one hand and his bombardier, behind him, was ready. Danger opened his mouth and yelled his lungs out to tighten abdominal muscles and resist pressure on vital organs.

At the precise final instant, he drew his head down between his shoulders, got set and started to come out of the dive. His head drew back slowly. There was no blackout. Captain Danger hadn't gone cold in many a flight. He'd learned things during his months of active service with the British.

He felt steel rip against the wings of the Vultee, but she took it like a veteran. They were levelled off now and rising to get out of range of those deadly guns on the destroyers.

Danger's target had been a large transport, loaded with troops. As he zoomed off the target, another and another and another Vultee came swooping down. The sea was an inferno of churning water. The transport which Captain Danger had hit with several small bombs, was already afire and listing. Troops were leaping into the sea.

A DESTROYER got a taste of the same brand of poison when two more Vultees dived on it and released their loads. A second transport was all but blasted to bits. Danger zoomed for altitude from which he could dive again. The bombardier had more eggs ready at the bomb chute. Things were all set.

This time Danger decided to go for a cruiser, a sleek, grey monster which

seemed to have the ability to hurl a highly dangerous curtain of steel. Yet he knew her guns couldn't possibly cover every inch of the sky. He'd watched bursts and knew just about what to do.

Unless he made a lucky hit down a funnel, those small bombs wouldn't sink this warship, but they would create an awful lot of damage and maybe stop the craft in its frantic effort to shepherd the convoy. At twelve thousand feet, Captain Danger circled to come back for the dive. As he swung around, he gave a visible start of excitement.

Further up the Strait, just about where the port of Samarinda lay, he spotted columns of smoke. There were enough to indicate that a substantial fleet was putting into port, Danger decided to have a look at them. But first there was the cruiser.

He slanted his nose down, braced himself again and went through the same antics as before. He felt the plane lurch slightly as the bomb load was emptied and he zoomed up. Below him, the cruiser took considerable punishment from those bombs. They landed near her stern, apparently blasted away the rudder. The cruiser was out of control and wallowing like a helpless duck on a pond.

The other bombers concentrated on it. Danger nodded in satisfaction. Those boys had been well trained in the short time he'd showed them the tricks. They penetrated the umbrella of steel thrown up by the cruiser, and when they darted away, the firing power of the ship had been reduced by about two thirds. Some armor piercing bombs had been used. They were equipped with time fuses, and these let go to buckle the deck plates, blast the hull.

Danger raced higher than before. He wanted a good look at the enemy formation just passing by Samarinda, or perhaps putting into that port. It was essential that the United Nations Command know about this.

Danger clapped glasses to his eyes. He could make out the cigar shapes of several ships. One was a battle wagon. There were two or more heavy cruisers and a whole swarm of destroyers. They were moving into Samarinda to anchor.

It was best that none of them spot him. If they believed themselves undetected, the element of surprise could be brought into play when the United Nations started their attack.

He flew back toward the convoy, dropped to eight thousand feet and saw his squadron performing beautifully. But there were only six planes left. One had apparently dived into the sea.

THERE were still bombs in the racks, so Danger dived once more, selecting another transport this time. He caught a glimpse of the cruiser. She wasn't firing any longer. Flames were belching out of her funnels. An armor piercing bomb must have reached a vital spot.

Lethal eggs slid down the chute again. One bomb missed the transport, but another exploded very close to her port side and gouged a hole in the flimsy hull. The ship was beginning to turn over even before Danger reached his required altitude again.

He checked the fuel supply, seized the radio mouthpiece and called orders.

"Well done, boys. We've done about all the damage we can do and still make our base. But don't worry—we'll be back."

He veered East to cross the island of Celebes and groaned as he saw it sprawled out below him. Parts of the island were alive with Jap troops. They'd had things pretty much their own way in the South Seas, but Danger, and every other man who wore a uniform, knew that the tide would soon change. The Japs would be blasted out of their strongholds.

More than an hour later, Captain Danger landed on a well camouflaged

field on one of the small islands off Celebes. From the sky, the island seemed to be basking peacefully in the sun. There were a few fishing boats off shore, small villages dotted the landscape. There were even a few cattle grazing.

But, hidden beneath the camouflage, were nests of United Nations planes—bombers of the heavy and medium class, pursuit ships just off the boats from the United States, fuel, ammunition, men in plenty. The Japs would have given a great deal to know the location of this base, but every precaution had been taken.

The villages were full of troops and spotters. The fishing boats were radio equipped and manned by sailors. Anti-aircraft batteries, strategically placed, were ready to go into swift action if luck turned against the island.

Danger stood by while the rest of his flight settled down to earth. He learned that one plane had been caught in a cross fire from the cruiser and been blown apart in mid-air. Three brave men had died, but they'd wreaked their vengeance on the Japs. That convoy had been badly battered.

MAJOR GENERAL WHITMAN sent for Captain Danger as soon as he finished giving his story of the operations to an intelligence officer. Whitman was white-haired, tall, and a clever commander. He'd seen Captain Danger only once before, because Danger had gone into instant action when he arrived.

Whitman returned his salute and indicated a chair.

"From what just happened, Captain," he said, "I don't think the reputation you gained in Europe has been exaggerated in the slightest. While you were on your way over here, Intelligence called and told me about those battleships at Samarinda. What do you think of them?"

"I don't know, sir." Danger filled his pipe and scowled at the ceiling for

a moment. "The Japs have pretty much taken over the entire area around here. This squadron of ships may be only intended to build up their strength. We've given them some hard pounding in Macassar Strait, sir. The Dutch have done nobly, too."

General Whitman nodded.

"I don't like it, Captain. From your described strength of the formation, I'm sure that our own fleet in these waters could amply take care of them. While the Japs have conquered the best ports, turned Allied forces out of whole islands, we still have a certain measure of air superiority. The Japs don't dare send warships down the Macassar Strait, for instance. Just small detachments and troopships such as those you just strafed and sunk."

"You mean, sir, that we have air superiority and also enough ships to take on the Japs around this sector?"

"Yes. They've found most of the air bases along the coasts of Borneo and Celebes destroyed. Furthermore, we have attacked them again and again. They have a few planes, but don't dare put them into the sky."

"Frankly, I'm thinking of destroying that battle formation at Samarinda. The only thing that prevents me from giving the order now, is that I have a feeling this might turn into a trap. Heaven knows, we can't stand any catastrophic losses."

Danger sucked on his pipe thoughtfully.

"Yes, sir. I agree with you. But if we can drive them out of the air and maintain greater numbers of surface fighting vessels, an attack seems to be called for. First of all, a reconnaissance flight, of course."

General Whitman nodded.

"Two planes took off some time ago to check. We should be hearing from them before long. Captain, I know of several highly strategic moves you made in Europe. Have you anything to suggest concerning this particular case? Mind you, I won't promise to

follow your ideas."

Danger leaned forward.

"If the scouts report the enemy formation still in the harbor, and your fleet is nearby, they could travel at full speed and reach Samarinda before dawn tomorrow. Precede the battle fleet with dive bombers, Flying Fortresses and a number of mine-laying planes. The harbor is quite narrow."

"While the dive bombers and Flying Fortresses occupied the Japs, the mine-laying planes could sow a dangerous field of mines. Possibly the Japs wouldn't even know it if the maneuver was pulled off properly."

Whitman whistled softly.

"By George, that's not a bad idea. Mine them into their own harbor and then attack. If they move out to meet us, the mines will take care of many and slow up the others while we keep pounding away. Captain—it might work."

"Yes sir—except for one thing. If this is a trap, the Japs may be hoping we'll carry out just such an attempt."

General Whitman looked grim.

"Yes, of course. It's a risk, but all war is risky. If we lost the fleet I intend to order into the Strait, the consequences would be disastrous. By the use of that fleet and our air power, we've prevented the Japs from expanding themselves beyond these parts."

"There's Australia, Hawaii—places the Japs would love to attack. I've got to think this over. Report to me again after our scout planes have called in by radio. Stand by to hear them too."

CAPTAIN DANGER arose, saluted smartly and walked out. He went to the radio shack, made himself comfortable and kept gazing at the loud speakers through which the voices of the scout plane pilots would come. It was almost dusk when the loud speakers crackled. Danger jumped up. Part of that crackling

was the sound of machine guns picked up by the open mikes aboard the scouts.

Then a voice, strained and hoarse, came over the loud speaker.

"Flight B calling Command. Flight B calling Command. Verify presence of battleship of Yoshiaki class. Two cruisers, six destroyers. Well inside harbor. I—just a moment."

The howl of the plane's motors roared through the system. More guns chattered, and then the radioman spoke again.

"We're having a bit of trouble here, sir. Flew inland at a great height, but they must have had sound detectors placed. Eight fighter planes are raising merry hades all around us. Shot down one. Oh-oh—here come two more of the stinkers. Be with you in a moment. Saw important..."

There was an ear splitting crash and then silence—the most horrible silence Captain Danger had ever experienced. It reeked of death and disaster. The scout plane, slow, undergunned, had more than likely been shot out of the sky and the radio destroyed at the same instant.

"Keep tuned in," Danger ordered the radioman. "I'll be at Headquarters."

He hurried into General Whitman's office.

"Sir, the pilot of that scout wanted to tell us more. I think the Japs risked everything in trying to prevent him from reporting. Those scouts saw something that wasn't intended for their eyes. I want permission to go over, sir."

Whitman shook his head.

"No. There's no object in losing you, Captain. Nor another plane. They're hard enough to get."

"But I have an idea," Danger pleaded. "There's a good chance it will work."

Whitman inclined his head slightly.

"Very well—what is it?"

Danger talked earnestly for ten minutes, could see that the command

officer was impressed. Whitman tapped the ends of his fingers together.

"The very boldness of your plan will help it to work to a successful conclusion. You intend flying one of our older bombers over Samarinda, pretend to be forced down and keep the Japs busy while a Vultee Dive Bomber comes in from the west and lands on one of the secret airfields the Dutch constructed months ago."

"Yes sir. We have maps of those fields. The Japs can't possibly have found them all. One in particular, not more than seven miles from the harbor, is very cleverly hidden. The Vultee can glide in, risk a landing without power and remain there for a limited time.

"Meanwhile, I'll allow myself to be taken prisoner if necessary. That way I might be able to see what the heck is going on. If I'm lucky and escape, the Vultee will be waiting. I'll radio the news at once."

General Whitman arose and offered his hand.

"It's one of the most perilous stunts I've ever heard of, Captain, but on your own head be it. I'll order the battle fleet into the Strait. If they don't hear from you, they'll proceed directly to the engagement at Samarinda. Wiping out an enemy concentration of that size will deal a serious blow to the Japs. It's worth the risk. Good luck, sir."

CHAPTER II

Voluntary Prisoners

CAPTAIN DANGER had his preparations made half an hour later. From volunteers composing the entire flying personnel, he picked two men. One was Hopkins, who was to fly the Vultee and make the glide. He was an expert on things of that kind.

The other was a sandy haired lieutenant named Burtis—a crack flyer and a cool customer. Danger had watched him in action.

Danger had a sub-machine gun tucked under one arm. He approached the old bomber which was to be sacrificed, made sure nobody was near it, then methodically proceeded to empty a clip at the plane. Bullets ripped through the cabin, the cowlings. He punctured the tail assembly, but not enough to make the plane dangerous to fly. When he had finished, the ship looked as though it had passed through a terrific barrage.

"I'd rather not let them shoot directly at me," Danger smiled. "Some of their steel might have my number on it. Hopkins, you know exactly what to do?"

Hopkins nodded.

"Yes sir. I'll come in at fourteen thousand, cut the engine and sit down as quietly as possible on that particular field you pointed out on the map. If the field seems to be occupied, I'll select another close by. In the event that I can't land at the first field, I'll fire a green flare. You'll know by that I'm at one of the other fields."

"Good," Danger approved. "Head across the western tip of Borneo, cut over Sarawak and come in from the west. The Japs haven't covered much of that territory yet. Most of it is jungle anyhow, so the chances of your being spotted are slim. Remember—they have detectors at Samarinda so glide, brother, glide. That's all. Expect to synchronize our watches."

Danger gave him the exact moment when to point his nose to earth. He watched the big dive bomber lift its wings into the night sky. The pilot needed a good start, so Danger and Burtis went to the canteen and munched sandwiches while they planned their perilous move.

At eleven o'clock, they were flying boldly across the Strait, keeping a good altitude. Bomb racks were full.

Danger meant to drop a load of poison if the opportunity arose. Burtis stood by the bomb sight.

Samarinda was blacked out, but Danger knew its location cold. He dropped a couple of thousand feet. Suddenly searchlight fingers slashed through the darkness. Two of them caught the bomber and held it. The Japs started to throw up a heavy barrage.

Captain Danger was whistling softly. Burtis had his eyes glued to the bomb sights. Danger estimated that they were just about over the docks. He signalled, and Burtis laid a row of eggs.

They burst far below, creating crimson fires. These gave enough light so that Burtis did a little better with the next stick. They straddled a dry dock. His third stick ravaged supply depots near the waterfront.

THERE was no time to drop any more. The sky was suddenly alive with Jap fighter planes. They swooped in from every direction. Danger never stopped his cheerful whistling. He put the nose of his plane down, gunned her hard and evaded the Japs. Two of them came hurtling after him, guns spitting. The old bomber gave a wild shiver, but somehow she held intact.

"I think," said Burtis through the phone, "that we got some real bullet holes that time, sir."

"We're going down before they get too close," Danger warned. "Hang on—I'm going to cut the engines and come in for a belly landing on a strange field. All I hope is that twenty or thirty Jap planes are in my way."

"Not likely, sir," Burtis answered. "All the ships they've got based here are chasing us now. I'm ready, sir. Bring her down."

Danger killed the engines, first choking the port one so that it gave off a thick stream of smoke. He let the starboard engine sputter on a too lean mixture and then killed it. The

ground was coming closer at a furious clip. Not that Danger could see it, but the altimeter told a significant story.

Burtis, on orders, watched the sky for a green flare but saw none. Apparently the Vultee had reached its destination without being detected. Then the plane hit the ground, bounced clumsily several times and ripped through small brush. Danger saw the shadowy hulk of a large tree just ahead of him, braced his feet and let the wing slam against the tree.

The big plane fell over on its side. Danger unstrapped himself, yelled to Burtis and the Lieutenant hopped out quickly. Danger flipped the fuse of a bomb planted near the instrument board and then got out fast himself.

The plane burst into flame moments later. In the eerie glow, Danger saw a number of Jap soldiers running toward them with bayoneted rifles. He motioned Burtis to raise his hands.

"This is one surrender I hope will pay dividends," he said fervently. "We may be in for a terrific session, Burtis."

"That's all right," Burtis grinned. "I always did want to meet some of these yellow scum face to face."

The soldiers advanced cautiously, guns set for instant action. A Jap lieutenant, with drawn sword, rushed closer. He gestured, and the hands of both American pilots went higher.

The Lieutenant searched them, unbuckled their gun belts and then bayonets pricked their spines. The Japs chattered away and led the procession toward the town, parts of which were burning fiercely.

In the glare, Captain Danger found an opportunity to study the waterfront. The battleships were steaming out of the danger area, but he saw most of them and knew their force would be no match for the American squadron probably moving up the Strait already. There was no apparent trap set here.

Danger and Burtis were thrust into

a room occupied by a diminutive, toothy officer who bowed twice and indicated chairs. He spoke perfect English.

"I do not understand why one plane made the raid. Perhaps you will put my mind at ease."

"Why not?" Danger said tartly. "I was over the Strait this afternoon. Yes, I helped to raid that convoy. Maybe you know that one of our planes was shot down. Well—my brother was in it. I decided to pay a little visit to some place where I could do the most damage. I was simply paying off for my brother's death."

"Ah yes." The Jap bowed again. "Just a moment, please."

He went over to steel filing cabinets and searched through them. Danger had a sinking feeling at the pit of his stomach. This Jap was too smooth.

THE Jap officer laid several pieces of paper on his desk, studied them a moment and grinned from ear to ear.

"A genuinely touching story, Captain Danger," he said. "But you see, I have a dossier about you here. It even includes a photograph of you. Our German allies were kind enough to furnish us with information concerning men who might be expected to take part in action against us. You have no brother, Captain."

Danger laughed dryly.

"All right—I haven't a brother. I came here because I wanted a crack at you, and I got it. From the windows, I can see my flight wasn't in vain."

He idly strolled toward the window. The Jap made no move to stop him except to open a drawer in his desk and allow fingers to close around the butt of a pistol.

"Captain, you will sit down, please. Possibly you have heard that we are barbarians. That is not so—when our prisoners are obliging too. But we can get tough. Very, very tough. Now, perhaps, you will tell me the truth. Why did you come here? What plans has your command in connec-

tion with the small fleet that put into the harbor today?"

"You know," Danger said softly, "they have got plans. Not only in connection with that small fleet, but with your entire forces. Yes, sir, we're going to destroy them. That means every tank, plane, ship, gun and man who gets in our way."

The Jap officer's smile changed to a scowl. He arose to his full height—about five feet two. He yelled a command. Three soldiers entered and stepped up to Danger.

"I mean to find out your plans, Captain," he said. "My dossier gives me some indication that I cannot expect too many results from questioning you, but this Lieutenant has no such reputation. I shall try him first. Meanwhile, ponder the idea, Captain. If you refuse to talk, you will be shot—after I am sure your tongue is tied."

He uttered more commands. Danger was hustled toward the door. Over his shoulder he caught a wan smile on Burtis' lips.

"Keep your nose clean," Danger said. "I'll be seeing you."

Danger's features were drawn in harsh lines as he was led away. He knew what kind of questioning Burtis would go through. The Japs could teach the Nazis a few things about torture. But Burtis had known the risk when he agreed to come along. All Captain Danger could do was pray for him.

They marched along a street that was alive with men. Some were hurrying toward the waterfront to help fight the fires. Others cursed and spat at Danger. A few eluded his guard and kicked at him. Danger made no move to resist or fight back. His brain was working at a terrific rate.

AMONG those many men in the harbor town, he noticed scores who wore wings of Nippon—pilots, mechanics, radiomen, navigators, bombardiers. There were enough to man

two hundred planes, yet this garrison was reputed to have only a handful of aircraft. Captain Danger was beginning to see the light.

Yet it was shrouded with a ghastly darkness. Trapped in the hands of these brutes, he had no idea how he'd get out. Burtis might be killed on the spot. The Vultee, secretly landed at one of the hidden fields, would wait only so long before it took off—certainly not after dawn.

They forced him at bayonet point to move toward a dismal looking shack. It had a cellar with four steps leading down into it—and an iron door. This was apparently the guard-house. They hurled him through the door and slammed it. The three men took up posts as sentries.

Danger brushed dirt off his clothing and took stock of affairs. They were all bad. To make matters worse, he was morally certain that the American forces would find themselves in a trap when they attacked. So many airmen indicated plenty of planes, which must be well hidden and transported to the island by night and only a few at a time. He wasn't certain, but the earmarks were there.

They hoped to trick the American battle fleet into moving up the Strait into a position where superior air power could strike and wipe it out. Danger groaned at the idea and sat down, propped against one corner of the cellar.

CHAPTER III

Break-through

PERHAPS half an hour went by, and still there seemed to be no solution. He'd been very carefully searched. He didn't even have a nail file with which to work on that lock—even if the place had remained unguarded. Thoughts of what Burtis

must be going through sent crawling horror into his soul. He clenched both fists, arose and paced the limited space of his prison.

The floor was dirt, cold and wet. The one small window was heavily barred, and through it he could see the legs of a sentry. Two more stood at the door. Danger sauntered over to the window and peered out. The sentry had his rifle grounded, was leaning heavily upon it. Danger pursed his lips.

He grabbed the grill work and tugged at it frantically. The sentry at the window jabbed through the bars with his bayonet. Danger drew back.

The pair at the door unlocked it. One of them stood guard with his rifle trained on Danger. The other clubbed his weapon and approached with a leer on his yellow face. Danger gave ground. He knew what was coming, and there wasn't much he could do about it—not with the second sentry ready to shoot him down.

The clubbed rifle swept toward his head. He dodged slightly to avoid the full force of the blow and recoiled with it. He was stunned by the impact of the gun butt—so much so, that his collapse looked like the real thing. The sentry kicked him half a dozen times and then, chattering happily, went back to his post. The door closed with a clang.

Danger remained sprawled out. So long as they believed him to be unconscious, he would be unmolested and have time to think. From where he lay, he could see the sentry at the window leaning on his rifle again. Danger knew the bars were wide enough so that he could drag the rifle through—if he got half a chance.

Then he heard footsteps, the door was unlocked and Burtis came flying into the improvised cell. He fell down and didn't move. Twice he groaned. Danger got up and approached him. He closed his eyes in horror. Burtis had been given the

works—everything that dapper little Jap officer knew.

"I . . . always wanted . . . to meet . . . yellow scum face . . . to face," Burtis managed through swollen, bloody lips.

"Easy," Danger warned. "Are they coming after me yet?"

"Not for . . . hour anyway. Is there any water, skipper? They put me through the wringer."

"Sorry, pal, no water," Danger whispered. "Listen, Burtis, just remain as you are. Rest. Rest hard as you can. Get strength back into your muscles. When you feel ready to go—I've got an idea that may work."

"Okay. Say . . . did you . . . notice all the flying officers? Some of . . . 'em joined that little Jap to watch me get grilled. Boy, have they got schemes about making a guy talk. I . . . feel a little better now. And skipper—I didn't talk. Why didn't you ask me if I did?"

"I don't insult my friends," Danger said. "Yes, I saw the officers. We've got to get out of here somehow. If there are planes to fit all those pilots, there's enough of them to take on our forces and sink every ship Whitman is sending up the Strait. The way to find out is to make somebody talk."

"Hah—I'd like a crack at that Jap officer," Burtis said. "He speaks English too, and he's a big shot, probably in on things."

"Right—and furthermore, guys who dish it out as he did to you, never can take it themselves. I found that out on a couple of expeditions to Germany. If it will make you feel any better, we'll take that Jap. Heavens knows how, but we'll take him."

BURTIS let out a raucous laugh. "That puts the old pep back into me. You can go into action any time you want, skipper. Just give me a line on what you intend to do."

"The first thing," Danger said with his lips against Burtis' ear, "is to get you over against the wall beside the

door. They can't plug you there."

"How about the guy at the window?" Burtis asked.

"He won't be in condition to plug anyone. Luckily it's quite dark in here. Keep your ears open. The boys at the door have relaxed a bit. They think I'm pretty badly hurt too. Watch this act."

Danger arose, tottered a few steps and fell to both knees. He was up again, slowly this time. The two sentries peered through the barred door at him and laughed sardonically. Then their faces were withdrawn. Danger dragged himself over below the window. He glanced up. The sentry was still leaning on his rifle.

Danger arose slowly. For some reason the area was very quiet. Possibly, the men who were not fighting the fires had been ordered to the parade ground for instructions about the following day's work. He could see no one but the lone sentry.

Rising carefully, he thrust an arm through the bars, got set and made a grab for the rifle. His fingers wound around the stock and tugged hard. The half awake sentry, with his full weight on the gun, came crashing down. Danger let go of the rifle, used both hands and grabbed the man's throat. He brought his head into violent contact with the bars. The sentry was stunned.

Danger kept his fingers to the man's throat. He looked over his shoulder. The two sentries at the door had apparently heard nothing of the brief scuffle. They were talking loudly, and Danger had an idea one of them owned a bottle of *saki*. He hoped so anyway.

The sentry's struggles grew weaker, and still those fingers were all but buried in his throat. Finally Danger let go, snaked the rifle through the bars and pulled back the trigger.

Burtis was on his feet, ready for action. His swollen, blood-smeared face was creased in lines of intense hatred. Danger walked slowly to-

ward the other side of the room, gun always pointed at the door. He had to work fast now. If the sentry's corpse were found, the whole game would be up.

From where he now stood, he could see the two guards at the door. They were not looking in his direction, and a weak lamp nearby illuminated them satisfactorily. Danger examined the rifle until he knew how to operate it fast. The thing wasn't quite like a Garand—in fact, it fell far short of the qualities the American rifle possessed.

He raised the gun to his shoulder, drew a bead and fired. One sentry spun around and dropped. The other, hardly aware of what had happened, made a jump toward the door. Danger's gun cracked for the second time. Burtis leaped then.

BEFORE the second sentry had fallen, he gripped the man and held him against the bars. Danger joined him, laid the rifle aside and signaled Burtis out of the way. Then, with a stupendous effort, he raised the sentry's body higher and higher, until his pocket were within reach.

Burtis searched them deftly, found keys and, in a moment, they were free. Burtis stopped to pick up a rifle, and he grinned confidently at Danger. Men were coming toward the place now. Danger indicated a passageway between two low buildings. They darted in that direction. Rifles spat, but the darkness swallowed them up.

"Straight to the place where that Jap officer held court," Danger said. "It was a low building. There were others of similar height alongside it and our objective is to reach the roof. Therefore, we'll invade the building this side. Be ready to shoot your way in or out."

The whole garrison was in a state of alarm. Whistles of non-commissioned officers called for more help. Men were hurrying in all directions.

But this was work at which Captain Danger excelled. He was like a ghost as he slipped through the night toward his destination.

They reached the house in mind without being spotted or challenged. Danger removed the bayonet from his rifle and signalled that Burtis was to do the same. They slung the rifles over their shoulders. Gripping the bayonets, both approached a rear door. Nobody was on guard, but once inside they heard voices.

Apparently a number of troops were quartered here and were getting ready to join in the hunt for the two escaped Americans. One man came rushing down the steps. Danger moved out behind him. The bayonet rose and fell. Burtis caught the man before he crashed to the floor.

He had a sack of grenades slung over one shoulder. Danger grinned and appropriated these.

"If we're trapped, we'll take plenty of these rats with us," he whispered. "Now for the roof."

Burtis got his hand in on the second floor. A Jap spotted Danger and made a line for him. He didn't see Burtis until too late. A bayonet did its quiet work again.

Moments later, they were on the roof, flattened against it and wriggling toward the adjoining building, where the Jap officer was quartered. Through a window on the first floor, they saw him. Danger saw something else too. There was a staff car parked directly in front of the place.

CLEARING the narrow chasm between buildings was a difficult, risky business. They made it though and both lay prone on the roof, regaining their breaths and getting ready for the final act. Captain Danger spoke in a barely audible whisper.

"It's getting late. Within an hour, the Vultee will take off. No message will reach the fleet or our air arm. They'll come up here and run into a mess of trouble, pal. Remember that.

The lives of hundreds of men depend upon you and me."

"Don't worry," Burtis grimaced. "I can't think of anything else. Skipper—can't we fix it so the fleet can move in and sink those Jap tubs? So our air force can take the Jap planes on and knock 'em out of the sky?"

"I'm afraid not. Best we can do is warn the boys to turn back before it's too late. Without question, the Japs have scouts placed to watch for the fleet. As soon as it is far enough up the Strait, they'll attack.

"If all the Jap planes were bunched together and we had enough bombs in the Vultee, there's a chance we might smash them. But they'll be spread around at several fields. Well—come on. We'll get his nibs and see if we can find out all the details."

Captain Danger leaned over the edge of the roof and looked down at the lighted window of the Jap's office. He signalled Burtis, gave him orders, then slid over the roof eave. Burtis grabbed his wrists, braced himself and lowered Danger until he hung just beside the window. It was at the back of the building, no sentries were on duty here and the spot couldn't be seen from the street.

Danger dropped lightly the rest of the way, crouched beneath the window and took a quick look inside. The Jap officer was pacing the floor and shouting commands at a non-com who looked as impassive as a Shinto god. Finally the man saluted and left the room.

Danger, his bayonet ready, looked for a chance to get at the officer. The window was closed and probably locked. If he so much as tested it, the whole game would be given away.

Then he had a break. The Jap hurried out of the room, leaving the door open, which indicated he'd soon be back. Danger forced the blade of the bayonet under the sash and sprung the cheap lock with little effort. He raised the window, crawled through and hastily closed it again. He moved

quickly toward the Jap's desk, opened the drawer and removed the automatic. He felt better with this in his hand.

Danger moved behind the open door and waited. The Jap returned in a few moments, slammed the door shut and, without looking behind him, went to his desk. He sat down, reached for some papers and froze in that position. Captain Danger, gun ominously pointed, was smiling at him.

"I think," Danger said dryly, "that we have already met, Major. I'm sure my friend Lieutenant Burtis is very familiar with you. Get up! Walk to that window and open it wide. Then crawl through. Burtis is on the roof with a rifle. If you make a break, he'll cut you down. Move!"

CHAPTER IV

Blast Out

THE Jap wetted his lips and for a moment Danger was afraid he'd commit suicide by shouting for help. He didn't though. He went to the window and climbed through. Burtis aimed his rifle, and the Jap saw it. He kept both arms raised slightly.

Danger signalled Burtis to come down, and he covered the Jap while the lieutenant dropped lightly to the ground. Danger searched the Jap then, gripping him tightly, and Burtis went ahead to spy out the situation. He signalled and broke into a run. Danger forced the Jap along at a fast clip too and they reached the staff car parked in front of the building just as Burtis shoved his foot down on the gas pedal.

There were Jap soldiers all around, but they were too busy prowling around buildings to watch what their officers were up to. The flying helmets which Danger and Burtis wore provided enough protection so that

their faces were not too visible in the blacked-out city.

Burtis turned the car around and roared out of town. He headed toward the secret airport where the Vultee was waiting. They had a chance now to get into the air and radio a warning to the battle fleet. That was all that mattered.

Danger grinned at the Jap major.

"Well, my yellow-faced louse, how does it feel to be a prisoner?"

The Jap curled his lips derisively.

"You are fools. All Americans are fools. They act before they think. High officers are at my quarters now. I was ordered to wait there for them. When I am missed, they will guess what has happened. The roads go only a short distance into the interior. If you do not surrender, my men will hunt you down or you will starve to death."

"Maybe," Danger admitted. "I think you're bluffing. What would high officers be doing in this dinky port? Even if that much is the truth, they'll just sit back and decide whether or not to string you up. By the time they get wise, we'll be far away."

"Nonsense. I am indispensable at Samarinda. I head the air force which is to be thrown against your fleet, Captain. Yes—we have many planes here. This has been a trap. We knew your commanders wouldn't balk at risking an attack on our small fleet. They'll never get within range of them.

"Even if, by some miracle, ~~they~~ ^{we} do, our ships are better. Our men are cleverer. This time, my white friend, you shall see the real superiority of the yellow race. Even now pursuit has started."

"An honorable lie," Danger said. "Or are you just trying to keep up your own morale?"

"It is the truth. All flying personnel are meeting at the main barracks. Every man is there—to receive orders. Within an hour the squadrons

will take off to engage your fleet at dawn. I am their commander. When I do not appear, they will know what happened."

"Burtis, stop the car," Danger said.

BURTIS braked and pulled over to the side of the narrow, rutted road. Danger forced the Jap out of the car, signalled Burtis to approach and told him to draw his bayonet. Then he handed the Jap his own bayonet and stepped back.

For a moment the Jap seemed confused. Then, with a howl of rage, he flew at Burtis. The fight was hard but brief. Burtis had a cold fury urging him on. He parried the Jap's rushing attack and whacked him over the head with the bayonet. The Jap crouched and sprang at Burtis.

This time Burtis didn't budge. The Jap's bayonet started up in an arc meant to rip the lieutenant wide open. But the blade didn't reach its mark. Burtis shot his bayonet forward. The Jap officer's own momentum made the job easier. The bayonet went through his neck.

Burtis watched him fall and smiled coldly. This was one man he didn't mind killing. Captain Danger tilted his head slightly.

"Burtis," he said, "the Major wasn't lying. There is an organized pursuit. Get into that car and drive. We must reach the Vultee."

They roared along the road, but some of the pursuers were mounted on speedy motorcycles, and the distance began to close somewhat. Captain Danger saw a small bridge just ahead. He ordered Burtis to slow down. As they passed over the bridge, Danger littered it with grenades.

Then Burtis stepped on it again. The grenades went off. There were enough of them to smash the bridge completely. The motorcyclists would ford the stream, but that would take a few minutes.

Then Burtis began blinking headlights frantically. He cut across a

field, ran into a deep ditch and stayed there. Danger jumped out of the car and began running. Burtis was right behind him. They saw the comforting outlines of the Vultee. Danger yelled at the top of his voice. The Vultee's engine roared into life.

They piled into the plane. As it slid across the ground, Danger talked through the plane's telephone system.

"Good work, Hopkins. Now do exactly as I say. Climb to eight thousand. Fly directly above Samarinda. I'll point out a large, low building. Every pilot, navigator and radioman is in that building. They can't know we're in the air. The men who chased Burtis and I won't be able to return fast enough to spread the warning. We can't destroy their planes, but if we can blast those pilots to bits, the planes won't be much good."

Hopkins raised a hand to indicate that he understood. Danger used the radio next and contacted his command.

"It was a trap," he reported. "Enemy formations are set to blast the fleet. I think I can stop them. Send mine-laying planes to bottle-up the Jap fleet. Blast the town with bombs. Have the fleet keep steaming at full speed to engage the Japs."

"Are you sure it will work?" Danger heard through his earphones. "We may still have time to withdraw."

"I'll let you know in less than five minutes," Danger answered. "Keep contact, sir. All the Jap pilots are assembled in one building to receive instructions. I'm going to try and nail them all."

There was grey dawn in the sky when Hopkins reached the proper altitude and position. Danger pointed down at the long building. Hopkins slanted the nose of the plane and put her into a power dive. Danger fingered the bomb release.

The target grew larger. He saw tiny figures rush out of the place, and the one exit seemed to be jammed with men. Then Danger tripped the re-

lease. He called orders to Hopkins to circle back and dive again from low altitude. Bombs slid down the chutes. Danger plastered the second load on top of the building. He saw men thrown yards away by the explosion. A few Japs were running madly across the open field near the building. Hopkins dived on them and his guns opened up.

They climbed again, dived, and Danger let go with more death and destruction. The building was on fire. It had caved in forward and he knew most of the Jap pilots were trapped inside.

Then, peering east, Danger caught a glimpse of the vanguard of Yankee power. Huge bombers were coming in fast. His own formation of Vultees were riding high to dive bomb the ships while the heavier planes laid their mines. Within an hour or two, the Yankee battle fleet would appear to finish off the Japs.

Danger switched on his radio and spoke into the mike.

"Danger calling Operations Base. Captain Danger to Operations Base."

His ear phones clicked.

"Operations Base to Captain Danger. Come in, Captain."

"Notify all air and sea squadrons that the sky over Samarinda is clear. Fortresses can bomb at low level. Enemy fleet being bottled up and wide open for attack. That is all."

He got a rousing okay from the other end. Danger leaned back and sighed deeply. The game had been worth its risk. Somehow, he felt proud. Not for himself, but for Burtis and Hopkins—for the winged armada that was preparing to hurl death at the Japs. And he was proud of those stars on the wings of his Vultee.

So long as those stars remained, the world had a chance—an opportunity to live again, without fear or oppression. The stars signified—victory.

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Harris, dangling from his parachute, saw the U-boat slide down out of sight

LAST COMMAND

By ROBERT SIDNEY BOWEN

It Was Curtains for Somebody No Matter How Things Turned Out—So Commander Stickney Played the Final Act Alone!

WITH her twin engines turning over just enough to give headway for steering, the non-rigid Naval airship J-6 loafed in and out among the scattered patches of cloud. She nosed along two thousand feet in the air over the broad reaches of the Atlantic some seventy-five miles off the Florida Coast.

At the controls at the forward end

of the gondola was Lieutenant Harris, fresh from the Lighter-Than-Air School at Jacksonville, and eager for his first sight of one of Adolf Hitler's underwater rattlesnakes that had been downing tankers like clay pigeons along the eastern seaboard these last few weeks.

Harris was eager for his first glimpse of a U-boat; eager to dump

some of the blimp's cans of death, and send the steel fish to the bottom to remain there until the end of time.

At Harris' side, a pair of powerful glasses practically glued to his eyes, was Commander Stickney, in charge of the J-6. By comparison he looked as though he was Harris' father. His face was lined, and there were little wrinkles at the corners of his eyes. There was also a touch of gray in his hair at the temples.

Whenever he lowered the glasses there was a look of concern, almost of gnawing fear in his deep-set eyes. It was almost as though he was afraid of what he might see. Or, perhaps, of what he might not see.

The three ratings that made up the blimp's crew stood silently at their watch posts, but every now and then they would shoot frowning glances at Stickney's broad back, catch each other's eye and hold up crossed fingers.

They knew the story about Commander Stickney, and they didn't like it. They liked it less that the man had been transferred from the west coast and given command of the J-6. True, they didn't know all the facts of Commander Stickney's story, but they had heard all the rumors. And rumors that persist and stick are usually close enough to the truth.

IN a few words, Stickney was a jinx commander. He had served in the Lighter-Than-Air for five years, now. And his record of service was far from something to write home about. No less than three blimps under his command had never come home to roost again. One during the year preceding Pearl Harbor, and two since that Jap stab in the back.

Fortunately, or because the gods were extra kind, no lives had been lost as the result of three mishaps. Once Stickney had seemingly misjudged his altitude in bad weather and had steered his blimp right into

some trees. When wind and the branches got through there wasn't enough of the silk left to make a dozen pair of shoe strings.

The second mishap had come while on patrol off San Francisco. A faulty engine had caught fire, and after a losing battle against the flames Stickney had ordered his junior officer and crew to bail out, and had followed them over the side. Radio had brought a patrol boat racing to the scene, and they had all been picked up.

The third disaster had happened in actual battle contact with an enemy submarine. Stickney had come down out of some clouds to find the craft on the surface. However, the enemy had obviously seen the blimp coming down through the overcast.

At any rate, before Stickney could maneuver into position to drop a depth bomb, the submarine's gun crew had shot off the tail of the blimp and caused the envelope to crumple up like so much wet paper. Once again the two officers and crew had bailed out, and a patrol boat had picked them up out of the water.

Strictly speaking not one of the three mishaps had been unquestionably Stickney's fault. The boards of inquiry had not placed the blame on him. Thus, he had been given another command each time. However, after the third accident it had been decided that for the good of the service it was best to transfer the commander to the east coast. And it was quite definitely known, though no official word had been spoken, that a fourth blimp lost would definitely see Stickney retired from the service.

"I sure hope we get a chance to work the trick, sir. There's nothing I'd like better than the chance to blow one of their steel fish to the bottom," said the lieutenant.

"Port your helm five degrees and keep her level, Harris," Stickney replied quietly to the junior officer's outburst of words. "If one's around and she sees us first, we're just wast-

ing our time. Keep some clouds under us."

The commander spoke without taking his eyes from the glasses. Hardly had the last word left his lips than a faint tremor of excitement rippled through him. Through the glasses he had picked up a short dark line low down on the distant horizon. It was no more than a short dark line, like a grease pencil-mark where the blue of the Atlantic met the blue of the sky.

One look at it, though, and he knew it was the decoy ship sent out to play its part in the relentless battle against Nazi U-boats operating off the Florida coast. It was an old condemned tanker, the old *Sea Gull*, that had been patched and painted just enough to make her look like a worth-while prize to some Nazi eye in a periscope.

ABOARD her were no more than half a dozen men. Just enough to keep her pounding engines turning over and pushing her through the placid waters at all of five knots. Not a drop of cargo oil was aboard her, and detailed arrangements had been made for the six men aboard her to safely abandon ship the instant a U-boat was sighted.

That word would come from the J-6. Those aboard the J-6 were to sight the U-boat approaching its prey and wireless the word to the ancient tanker. By the time the first torpedo, or the first U-boat shell smashed home, the six aboard her would be quitting ship. The main reason for the J-6 on this patrol, however, was that she would be able to steal over the under-sea craft and blow her into eternity before the sub could crash dive and get away.

It was a sort of last chance assignment for Stickney. Nobody had said it was, but he knew it just the same. His past record wasn't so good, and he wasn't getting any younger either. With the war going full blast there were numerous young officers, like

Harris, eager for their chance to prove their worth, and their fitness for more and more responsibility.

His last chance, and he knew it. Flub-dub this one, and he would command no other blimp. He probably wouldn't even be given the command of a training balloon. The Navy was giving him his last break. What he did about it was up to him.

Stickney shrugged away the thought and lowered the glasses for an instant to rest his eyes. The three crew members saw the gesture and cocked skeptical eyebrows.

At that moment Harris happened to turn his head and caught their expressions. His frown wiped their faces blank in a flash. He, himself, took a quick look at the commander and some of the joy went out of his heart. He knew the Stickney story, of course, but a sense of loyalty to his present senior officer refused to let thoughts of that story enter his mind. Yet, the look he saw on Stickney's face made him wonder.

The man was plainly worried. The corners of his mouth were drawn tight, and there was an eerie sort of glaze to his eyes. Was memory haunting Stickney? Was he going to crumble, and fail those under him at the crucial moment? Harris gritted his teeth with decision, snapped a glance at the toggles within reach that released the depth charges, and then returned his attention to the controls.

"Go up another hundred, Harris," came the order from Stickney. "And hold her as she goes. There's the decoy ship dead ahead five miles. Everybody keep their eyes skinned for periscope wake. Most anything can happen any minute now."

The last seemed to drop falteringly from the commander's lips. Harris wasn't sure, but he thought that Stickney trembled at his side. He toyed with the idea of suggesting that Stickney take the controls while he took the glasses, but he killed the thought even as it was born.

It wasn't his place to suggest what his commanding officer should do. But maybe he was all wet. He hoped and prayed he was. There was something about Stickney that he liked, even admired. He didn't even know what it was. It was just—something.

"Feathered water to starboard, sir!"

The shout from one of the crew aft in the gondola seemed for an instant to freeze Harris' blood like water. It was all he could do to force himself to turn around. When he did he saw that Commander Stickney was already aft at the crew member's side and fixing his glasses to starboard and down.

Harris stared that way for a couple of moments, but he could see nothing save rolling blue swells. Then suddenly his eyes focused on the thin line of frothy white that was being traced along the surface of the water. Another moment and he saw the three feet of submarine periscope that stuck up out of the water.

THE wake line was heading straight for the dummy tanker not four miles away. Harris' heart pounded against his ribs. It was agony to wait for Stickney to shout the order to swing the blimp around and take a course that would carry it straight over the U-boat creeping up on its prey. It was actually no more than three seconds, but it seemed three years before the order came.

"Hard starboard and down by the nose!"

Harris hauled the blimp about and then pushed the nose down. The lighter-than-air craft answered to the pressure of the controls at once, but Harris died a thousand terrible deaths before the blimp was plowing at full engines down toward the frothy white line some two miles away.

No sooner did he have the blimp heading down for a depth charge attack than the frothy white line spread out on both sides. Sea water boiled up in white foam, and the saw-toothed

snout of a Nazi U-boat came plunging up through onto the surface. Harris stared at it in dumbfounded amazement. He heard Commander Stickney curse harshly. Then came the second order.

"About ship to port, Harris! Up nose, and hold your altitude!"

Harris gulped and struggled with his tongue.

"What?" he heard his own voice yell. "We won't be able to get close over her if we let her surface!"

Commander Stickney turned his head and there was fire in his eyes.

"To port, Harris, and up nose!" he snapped. "We haven't a chance of getting over them in time. Their deck guns would blow us right out of the air. Radioman! Send warning to the tanker."

Harris didn't wait to see the radioman leap to his set. He turned and gave his attention to the controls. Rage choked in his throat, and his heart had become an aching lump of lead in his chest. Memory had cut down Stickney in the moment of crisis. Memory of that time in the Pacific not so long ago when a Jap submarine had shot the tail off Stickney's blimp.

Memory of that narrow escape from death had sapped from him that extra something that is often the difference between victory and defeat. Maybe there had been time to get over the U-boat and drop depth charges before its bow guns could open fire, but maybe there hadn't. The point was, Stickney had refused to take the chance.

Anyway, it was now too late. The U-boat had surfaced completely, and men were spilling down out of the conning tower hatch. That meant that they were going to shell the tanker with one gun, and keep the J-6 at a safe distance with the other. Harris lifted his eyes and stared up at the clouds. There was a fairly thick layer a couple of thousand feet above them. He started to turn and

call to Stickney, only to find the Commander at his side.

"Could we go up and sneak over in the protecting of that cloud layer, sir?" he asked and jerked a thumb skyward.

Stickney didn't answer for a moment. He was half-turned away and had his glasses fixed on the U-boat.

"Not enough time," he said presently. "He can put shells in the tanker, and crash dive, long before we get into position."

Harris tried desperately to swallow the words that churned up in his throat, but they just wouldn't go

be five lives, probably, sacrificed for no good at all. The trick fell through, Harris. She somehow sighted us, and knew that she could surface and use shells instead of torpedoes. I—"

Stickney stopped as the bow gun of the U-boat belched smoke and flame. Harris instantly turned his gaze toward the tanker slogging doggedly forward, but there was no fountain of water close to the boat, or any sheet of flame. Instead there was sound akin to a train rushing through a tunnel, followed almost instantly by a sound that was like barn doors slamming together. Harris flinched

*The Best Number One Native Boy in Burma Helps Jerry Douglas,
Harum-Scarum American Flying Tiger, in a Rip-Roaring Air
Fight Against the Pilots of the Rising Sun*

IN

BURMA BOY

A Sky Action Novelet

BY TRACY MASON

PACKED WITH HIGH-POWERED BATTLE THRILLS

Coming Next Issue



down. They poured off his lips with blistering bitterness.

"Then let's charge them, anyway! If we can only drop a couple of bombs, what do we care if they do blast us out of the air? My God, sir, are you going to let them get away with it?"

STICKNEY lowered his glasses and turned his head. There was deep sadness in his eyes, but his voice cracked like a whip.

"Do you think I want to let it go?" he said. "But we wouldn't stand a chance. This blimp makes too perfect a target. I know, Harris. It would

and instinctively ducked. Stickney didn't move, but his face turned a little gray.

"Up ship some more, Harris!" he ordered, tight-lipped. "That one fell well short, but he might get our range on the next one. It's—"

The commander cut himself off short, stiffened slightly, and then leaned well out the gondola window. For a full fifteen seconds he held the glasses clamped to his eyes. Then he pulled his head in, let the glasses hang by the strap about his neck as he stared at Harris.

"I'll take over, Lieutenant," he said

in a strangely quiet voice. "You and the crew blow up your life jackets, and bail out. Have the Radioman send out an SOS with our position. There'll be a boat along soon, or a sea-plane to pick you up."

Harris gulped, and gave a little shake of his head, as though not quite sure he had heard correctly.

"Abandon ship, sir?" he gasped. "Leave you here? But I can't do that. You said there wasn't a chance of getting over her. Look, sir—"

"Shut up, Harris; you got the order!" Stickney cut him off harshly. "Hop to it! Don't worry about me. Good luck, Harris. You'll make a good blimp commander some day."

"Don't be a fool!" Harris shouted. "It's just throwing your life away."

COLD, hard ice in Stickney's eyes froze further remonstrance. Harris licked his lips once, gulped, then snapped a hand up in salute.

"Yes, sir, very good, sir," he said with an effort.

Sixty seconds later Harris and the three crew members were at the opened door of the gondola. Stickney had brought the blimp about so that it was flying away from the U-boat.

The German undersea craft had stopped throwing shells up at it, and was busy slamming them into the tanker now less than a mile away.

Harris glanced quickly that way, and there was a moment of joy in his heart as he saw the single lifeboat with six figures in it pulling well clear on the far side of the shelled tanker. He turned and looked back at Stickney, tried to speak, but couldn't.

The Commando smiled, shook his head, and then made a little motion with his hand for the four of them to bail out. Harris tried once more, but it was no use. He turned to the first member of the crew and nodded. The crew dived out into thin air, one, two, three. Then Harris stepped off into space.

COMMANDER STICKNEY, watching from the controls, let go a long sigh as Harris disappeared from view. At the same time he brought the blimp around hard, stuck the nose down, and went full out toward the submarine. He had hardly started down when a shell came screaming up past him.

He laughed harshly, and yawed the blimp a little to the left, then brought it back on the U-boat again. His face was tensed and strained, but there was a wild, happy light in his eyes. It was the look of a man suddenly released from some terrible torment. His lips moved and words came out, but he hardly knew he was speaking.

"We've got to make them miss a few, baby," he said, and yawed the blimp around to the left and upped nose a bit. "We've got to keep them busy just for a few moments. Just long enough. We can do it. We've got to do it. After that it doesn't matter. Come on, baby! In at them and keep them busy."

Dangling back and forth at the ends of his parachute shroud lines, Harris tilted back his head and stared up at the J-6 dancing all over the sky. As each shell exploded dangerously close to the bouncing blimp his heart stopped cold, and then started beating again only when no flames enveloped the J-6.

But he knew that it was a losing battle Stickney was waging against the guns of that U-boat. The J-6 was a good half mile from a position directly over the U-boat, and each shell that spewed out from the mouth of the gun was closer to the J-6 than the one before it. A losing battle.

Stickney didn't have a chance. It was a glorious effort, but it was sheer suicide. Stickney's own words were proving true. The J-6 didn't stand a chance of breaking through that curtain of gun fire to reach a position where depth charges could be dropped.

"I should have made him give up

the attack," Harris groaned through clenched teeth. "I shouldn't have let him go out this way, even if he wanted to. It wasn't his fault. The U-boat surfaced too soon . . . we weren't in position. The thing to do was get clear of the gun fire. They wouldn't have broken him for that. He—"

The U-boat's gun had found its mark. Square in the center of the J-6. Before Harris' horrified eyes the gondola of the blimp seemed to fall off and burst into flames. In a split-second flames were sweeping up the envelope. It buckled in a dozen places, crumpled up like fire-seared newspaper. And then the whole business went tumbling down toward the sea. The two engines dropped free, but they were all that fell down out of that flaming mass.

Harris dashed hot tears from his eyes and turned his head toward the U-boat.

"You dirty, lucky devil!" he groaned. And then his eyes widened incredulously.

The U-boat wasn't there any more. Yes, it was there, but even as Harris looked at it the craft seemed to leap clean out of the water by the bow. And as it leaped upward a great volcano of orange-red flame and oily black smoke towered upward from its

starboard side square amidships.

Heart still in his chest, breath locked aching in his lungs, Harris stared pop-eyed as the U-boat's bow came up until it was almost pointing the sky. Then, as though giant hands under water had grabbed it by the stern and pulled, the U-boat slid down in out of sight, leaving only a boiling pool of flame and smoke on the water to show where it had been.

Finally, as Harris lifted his gaze, he saw a second submarine breaking surface not a quarter of a mile beyond the other side of the boiling pool of flame. But it wasn't a U-boat, it was an American submarine. And as Harris stared at it unbelievably a bit of memory came clicking back to him. He remembered how Commander Stickney had cut himself off short and had suddenly leaned out the gondola window. Harris remembered, and now understood.

"He saw the periscope of that Yank pig-boat working into position," he murmured softly. "Saw it, and knew that it was up to him to keep the Huns looking our way. Yeah, keep them busy. But it would mean curtains for sure, so he made us jump. He did it alone. His last command—but it was his *all the way!*"

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HOP-SCOTCH TO VICTORY

By SAM MERWIN, JR.

Way Down South in Alabama Uncle Sam Is Training the Toughest Army of Men in the Sky to Destroy the Axis Air Armadas!

STRANGE sights are on view these days in the more than two-score air schools of the Southeast Air Corps Training Center, whose headquarters is Maxwell Field near Montgomery, Alabama.

For the first time since the lusty days of Robin Hood and Friar Tuck and the villainous Sheriff of Nottingham, scores of young men may be seen engaged in quarterstaff drill.

That it is called "wand" drill in no way reflects on the virility of the sun-tanned youths. Nor does the fact that they also play a sort of animated checkers on a huge cloth of black and white squares—a sort of precision hop-scotch.

For, they are the youngsters Uncle Sam is training to knock the Luftwaffe and the Japanese air fleets out of the skies.

It all started back in March, 1940, when Major General Walter R. Weaver, newly-appointed commander of the new training center, called in Ernest B. Smith, veteran professor of physical education at Auburn University, and handed him the job of working out a training program to give our fliers maximum physical efficiency.

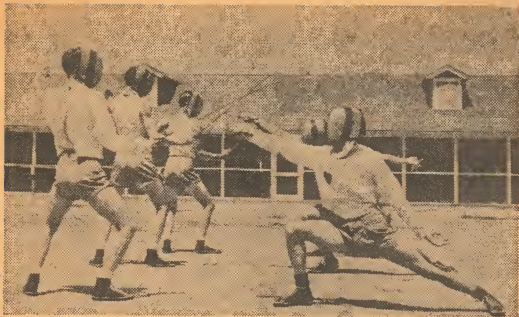
Durable Fighters Wanted

"When we go to war," he said—the general, an iron-jawed veteran of the old command is nothing if not a realist, and appeasers and pacifists and the lack of a state of war meant nothing to him—"our boys must be in better physical condition.

"I want the men who graduate from this school to be mentally and tactically superior to the enemy they will have to face. But I also want them to



Photos by Southeast Air Corps Training Center
"Kick, kick, one-two-three kick!" This is no super chorus for a college musical show, but a group of Primary School student flyers learning rhythmic coordination to the strains of the "Merry Widow" waltz. The boys are deadly serious about it, for they know that upon this coordination will depend their chances of survival in the great air battles that lie ahead of them. Those in the foreground, wearing dark tunics, are R.A.F. students. Our gang are the group beyond them



Basic training students, usually floored by their first encounter with a high-powered plane, need mastery of a sport to build up their confidence. For this, the generally-held outmoded sport of fencing is ideal. It not only gives the future pilot assurance to master the foils, but, at the same time, it develops split-second coordination, judgment of moving objects, keenness of vision and aggressive as well as defensive skill. It is also a pretty thorough test of the cadet's nerve

have the beef, brawn, agility and sheer driving power to outlast their opponents, if necessary in hand-to-hand combat!

"I want them to be the hardest, toughest and most durable fighters in the sky!"

Smith immediately hired two assistants who knew their stuff both in athletics and military life, and they set about training a gang of athletes and coaches to cover all the schools of the area. Which was no soft problem.

The chief question before them was: How does one go about putting an aviation cadet in the peak of condition? They knew all there is to know about preparing athletes for football, track, baseball or basketball. But this wasn't a game.

This was war.

How could a coach develop a man, make him proof against the intense fatigue brought on by long hours in the air? Where did this fatigue originate? What muscles did a pilot use?

Lord Godiva

Director Smith and his aides solved this last problem in a simple if some-

what spectacular manner. A cadet was selected for his lean body and whipcord muscles, which rippled under the surface of his skin with every move he made.

The cadet was brought to the center of the training field, where a plane was waiting, and was surrounded by the instructors.

He was abruptly told to strip. Under the hot Alabama sun, he climbed stark naked into the plane and proceeded to go through all the motions of flying without actually taking the ship off the ground.

Meanwhile, the instructors watched him, making careful notes and diagrams of how his muscles were called upon for each different maneuver.

The cadet promptly earned the lasting nickname of "Lord Godiva of the Air Force," and he's pretty sheepish about it all.

Valuable New Discoveries

But from his sacrifice of modesty valuable lessons were learned. Smith and his staff discovered that flying called upon muscles which suffered no demands from other sports.

The swivel, side-to-side motion used

by all pilots when in the air to see what's going on around them, put a terrific strain on the sterno-claedo and trapezius muscles of the neck.

The rigid posture in the cockpit, intensified when banking on turns, was a heavy tax on the "sheet" muscles of the abdomen. And those were only a few of the valuable facts learned.

From this test, the program was evolved. It is a twofold program.

First, of course, it was necessary to strengthen the muscles at all points of stress beyond all probable demands in action. And, secondly, comes a more elusive objective—a phantom will-o-the-wisp called coordination.

Cultivating Coordination

Coordination is the lightning-quick cooperation between brain, nerves, and muscle which insures split-second timing aloft. In the last war, a pilot either had it or he didn't.

Thanks to the development of Smith's program, however, it is now possible to cultivate coordination in men of slow reflexes. In other words, the channels between the brain and

the extremities can actually be cleared, thus establishing a closer alliance between the two.

Hence, the wand drills and the glorified hop-scotch. Usually done to music, they develop a sense of rhythm and fluid motion in obedience to rapid commands that greatly speed up pilot coordination.

Along with these, tumbling exercises were introduced, not only to foster quick reflex timing, but to inure the cadet to the rigors of parachute landing in rough terrain.

It was then learned that the needs of student pilots in Primary, Basic and Advanced Schools were at considerable variance. In the first, the cadet lives in mortal fear of "washing out."

He is apt to be tense with worry. This dread of doing the worst all too often makes him live down to his expectations.

Accordingly for Primary students, the purpose of the exercises was to put them at ease, teach them to relax under pressure.

Swimming for Endurance

The Basic student, feeling pretty cocky about graduating from Primary School, has a tendency to be a bit overconfident till his first bout with a plane bearing a high-horse-power motor and delicate controls.

Then his confidence is apt to take a nose dive. Hence, for students in this category, individual contests are stressed to give him a sense of mastery.

Swimming, for increased endurance and possible use in the event of being shot down over water is one such sport. Or, it may be fencing, to increase coordination and speed of reflex action while mastering a sport whose principles still apply in all forms of physical combat though the sword is gone with the wind as an effective weapon.

Then again, it may be archery, which demands steadiness and self



You've got to get used to being upside down in mid-air if you're going to fly a fighting plane. Tumbling is another essential of the Primary School athletic training course at Southeast Air Corps Training Center, Montgomery, Alabama. But tumbling teaches more than aerobatics. It trains the cadet how to land safely in a parachute. This is no soft snap since the usual parachute comes down with a bump equivalent to that of a leap from a twelve-foot wall. Knowing how to fall saves a lot of broken bones.

One of the sports used to develop the confidence of a Basic training cadet is archery. While it is doubtful, to say the least, that a bow and arrow would be particularly effective against a Messerschmitt or Mitsubishi, the ability to hit the gold bull's-eye with a feathered shaft increases the pilot's steadiness of hand and eye, gives birth to the fine precision necessary for handling warplanes or machine-guns or bomb sights in actual combat. So, indirectly it is a very potent weapon. Indeed



control as well as accuracy of aim. Learning to do any or all of these well, bolsters the cadet's confidence as well as increasing his efficiency as a human air-fighting machine.

Advanced Student Work

The advanced student's problem is again different. He takes many more hours of classroom and air work than either of the other groups.

Aloft, he may be learning the intricacies of fighter flying or the even stiffer job of handling a medium bomber or flying fortress, and adjusting to his mates as part of a bomber team. He's got to master a lot in a few short weeks.

Yet, all this is child's play to what he undergoes on the ground. Here he studies navigation, dead reckoning and astral, learns how to tell exactly where the plane is at any hour of the day or night in any part of the world.

He must learn radio code, gunnery and at least the elements of bombardment. And he isn't learning them to get a degree, but in order to keep alive while in the air.

As a result of this terrific schedule, the advanced pilot is apt to get overstrained, and you can't blame him.

If any college lad in time of peace went through such a stiff set of paces, his parents would go screaming to their congressman, complaining that little Willie was in imminent danger of collapsing from a nervous breakdown.

It would be an even chance they'd be right at that. In time of peace there would be a lot of crackups.

No Time for Breakdowns

But these boys know it's dog eat dog—that they've got to learn their stuff or else. They haven't time for breakdowns. But the danger is always there and it's the task of Director Smith and his aides to see that it doesn't happen.

As a result, they've devised a variety of games and sports—baseball, tennis, or what have you—which will relax and renew nerves and muscles petered out from the prolonged grind.

By the time he's graduated, the cadet, or "gadget," as the regulars call

him, is as thoroughly conditioned physically as any but the greatest of athletes can be. He's fit and tough, and ready to go.

What's even more important, from the day he's entered ground school, his individual weaknesses and strong points have been noted down and systematically strengthened or balanced to make him a better all-around human machine.

Bookkeeping System for Muscles

Every time a new group of pilots, navigators or bombardiers enters the Replacement Center, a card is made out for each man, giving his physical record to the moment of his joining up.

This card follows him all the way through until he is washed out or gets his wings. It is a sort of bookkeeping system for the purpose of recording and auditing muscles to the individual.

There is no attempt at medical analysis, for actual ailments and their care are a function of the medical department.

But the cadet is classified as to type—slight, lean, heavy—overdeveloped, underdeveloped, average—curved spine, round-shouldered, sway-backed.

The card follows the effectiveness of the exercises prescribed for each pilot, includes personal comment on the cadet by his instructor.

Sometimes even special diets are issued.

Results Are Promising

The program is still too new to permit a full evaluation of its worth. However, early symptoms are as promising as a sulpha drug. The average height of a recent cadet class under the program increased .227 inches in four weeks.

In the same class over the same period, the average weight increase was 4.8 pounds. And further evidence is given the eye-witness by the new

muscles popping up like mushrooms on the advanced students.

Another use for the physical training department is its already proven use to predetermine washouts. His ability or inability to perform certain types of physical feats is a fairly accurate index to the cadet's chances of getting his wings.

The exercise in which the trainers put the most confidence for this purpose at present is known as the Burpee test after its originator. In this exercise, the student hurls himself from a standing position to a horizontal one on the ground, then leaps back to his feet.

The Burpee Test

The normal pilot candidate, who is, remember, a better than normal physical specimen to begin with, can perform this feat between fifteen and twenty times per half minute.

The experts maintain that a student who is only able to do it seven times or less in the prescribed thirty seconds is a pretty good bet to wash out unless he is able to improve himself radically.

Statistics reveal that eighty-three per cent of those men who scored seven or less in one Primary Class were duds. And ten out of fifteen the trainers predicted would wash out in another class crashed neatly out of the school.

Three of the remainder are on the border line of failure at this writing. It is becoming more and more an established fact that a cadet *must* be in tip-top physical condition to make the grade as one of Uncle Sam's pilots.

Toning Up Morale

However, it is not the function of the athletic program to determine washouts. Rather, it is the job of the coaches to prevent them. They know this, and so do the eager young men training under them. For this reason, the new system has, to date, proved an unqualified success.



Take a look at these toughies if you don't believe the physical training course is effective. These are the Advanced Flying Cadets, graduates of the stiff course of sprouts laid out by Director Ernest B. Smith, walking out on the line for an afternoon's classwork aloft. They are fit and confident despite the terrors of as rigorous a load of mental and physical work as any group of young men ever attempted. By the time this is in print, they'll have tasted blood against the Axis

Finally, the program is developing into an excellent morale builder. The student pilots take to it like the well-known ducks to water.

They don't have to be ordered or cajoled. They crave the escape from the routine of strenuous flying and classroom duties which physical training offers them.

It tones them up and keeps them toned up. These lads were healthy

Americans to begin with and are missing no chances to improve their health. They know that every extra ounce of strength, every atom of co-ordination will make them that much tougher for a Jap or a Nazi flier to take.

They want to be the New York Yankees, the Chicago Bears of the air. And they're on their way! Keep 'em flying!

THE FLYING LEATHERNECKS

The Story of Our Fighting Marines, Who Lead the Way in America's Resolve to Keep Pace with Every Advance in Modern Warfare!

By SAM MERWIN, JR.

Coming in the Next Issue



REMEMBER THE REUBEN JAMES, TOO!

By STUART CAMPBELL

*Lieutenant Becker Had an Impossible Choice to Make—Until
a Wild Irishman Took the Decision Out of His Hands!*



HIGBY stared hard for a moment at the bank of fog that mounted high in the sky some ten miles ahead of the PBY flying boat. Then with a half nod he reached back and rapped Lieutenant Becker on the arm as he bent over the navigation chart.

"Don't look right now, Beck!" he sang out. "But that man is here again!"

Becker instantly swung around, slipped forward into his seat and let his blue eyes follow the direction of the co-pilot's pointing finger. For a brief instant he saw nothing but the dirty grey fog bank hanging like a half-deflated balloon in the air. Then he saw the black dot that was scooting along its crest in a direction at right angles to the PBY's course. As a matter of fact, even as he spotted the plane it veered around sharply and started down toward them in a long power dive.

"Can't sight his markings, yet," Becker grunted aloud. "But it's a cinch it's him. Old Colonel von Bluenose, in the flesh. That guy certainly loves his flying. I'll say that much for him. Buzz the crew, Higby. I'll take over."

Higby nodded, swung the Dep wheel over to Becker's seat, then picked up the inter-com mouthpiece and gave the "enemy approaching" warning to the three members of the crew aft. As soon as he received the Okay-check, he hung the mouthpiece on its little hook and let his eyes roam over the

uninviting grey swells of the North Atlantic several thousands of feet below the patrolling seaplane.

"I could be wrong," he grunted presently, "but it's my guess that von Bluenose and Red Cap are working this racket as a team. And doing all right, too, worse luck!"

"Yeah, you've got something there," Becker murmured, and kept his gaze fixed on the approaching plane.

It was a long range Messerschmitt 110, obviously fitted with extra gas tanks, for its present position was a good two hundred miles due south of Reykjavik, Iceland. Every day for a week, now, Becker and his crew had sighted the lone Nazi craft while on patrol. Twice the Messerschmitt had given battle, and twice the fire power of the flying boat had forced the German to call it off, and go away in a hurry. Who the pilot might be, they had not the slightest idea, but after the second meeting they had dubbed him Colonel von Bluenose because of the color of the fuselage nose. A nice robin's egg blue, with everything else jet black. There was not even the usual white outline of the Nazi cross on the wingtips.

For the first two or three days, it had been a pleasure to meet up with Colonel von Bluenose. It relieved the monotony of the patrol. After the third day, however, it became evident that the Nazi pilot was—intentionally or otherwise—gumming up the real purpose of their patrol: The hunting down of a certain Nazi U-boat.

The German shark had been sighted often in Icelandic waters. It had done



Machine gun in hand, Ensign Casey dangled less than a hundred feet above the stern of the U-boat

more than a little damage to ships carrying war stuffs to Iceland and England, and was instantly recognized because of the dull red color of its conning-tower hatch. Like *Bluenose*, *Red Cap* kept popping up in the most unexpected places. The last time, it nailed a U.S. Army Transport carrying reenforcements to Uncle Sam's North Atlantic outpost.

Two hundred men had lost their lives in the icy waters, and from that moment on, the Navy patrol flying out of Reykjavik had only one objective—to hunt down and nail *Red Cap* once and for all time.

TO make doubly sure that such would be accomplished when the opportunity presented itself, full bomb racks were carried by all the PBYS. Any one of them, well placed, could make it curtains for the U-boat. That was just the point, however! When opportunity presented itself. It had, three times. And each time Becker and his boys had been the lucky ones to spot the craft in the water. But each time, also, Colonel von Bluenose had dropped down out of nowhere to take up their attention before an eye could be clamped to the bomb sight. And by the time von Bluenose was driven off, *Red Cap* just wasn't around any more.

"Yeah, it's a cinch they're working as a team," Lieutenant Becker spoke again. "You get forward to that bomb sight, and keep your glims on the water. This time, nuts to that Nazi! We'll take first crack at the U-boat—if we sight it—and play with that Messerschmitt later. That guy's getting in my hair."

"Make that last plural!" Higby grunted and slid forward to the bomb sight and bomb release toggles in the nose. "One sight at him is all I'll need, too—I hope!"

"Luck!" Becker called after him. Then in a sharper tone, "Here he comes!"

The Messerschmitt had dropped

down off the top of the fog bank like a blue-tipped streak of lightning. It had kept on going down until it was well below the PBY. But now the pilot had pulled out and was roaring, gun spitting at the belly of the flying boat. Becker sensed rather than felt the Nazi's machine-gun bullets banging against the hull, but he held the ship steady for a moment longer to give the two gunners in the "blister" aft a good crack at the attacker.

He heard their guns chatter savagely, and a split second later he saw the Messerschmitt tear upward past his left wing. Muscles set he heeled the PBY around as fast as he could and gave the Nazi craft a furious blasting with his forward guns. Whether or not he hit it, he couldn't tell. The Messerschmitt did seem to jump a little in the air, but it kept on going. In fact, it kept on going until it was out of sight in the fog again.

"Not this time!" Becker heard Higby's voice call out. "There isn't the sign of a thing on the water or in it. Maybe *Bluenose* is just out for solo fun today. Look at the holes in that port wing!"

Becker didn't look. At that moment a young ensign gunner came forward and touched him on the shoulder.

"Davis caught a couple, Lieutenant," he said. "He's hit pretty bad."

Becker swore softly under his breath, ordered Higby to take over, and went aft to where they had stretched out the wounded gunner in the store's compartment. He was only a kid and was bleeding a lot at the neck, but his white lips went back in a grin as the commander bent over him.

"Just a scratch, sir," he said with an effort. "My own fault. I should have nailed the louse before he nailed me. Had him square in my sights, too, and—"

The lad's voice faded off into silence. His eyes closed and for one awful moment Becker's heart was caked with ice. But the young gunner wasn't dead. He was still breathing. Snatch-

ing the medical kit out of somebody's hands, Becker did what he could to stop the flow of blood from the bullet wounds, and patch up the kid. He had lost a lot of blood, though, and quick hospitalization would be the only chance to save his life. Becker glanced at his watch, then looked at the ensign gunner.

"Tell Lieutenant Higby to radio the base for a relief plane to take over our patrol!" he snapped. "Tell Higby to tell them we're coming in on all engines. But, he's to make no report of the engagement with an enemy aircraft. Get going!"

A LITTLE over two hours later, the PBY was moored to her buoy in Reykjavik Harbor, the wounded man was in the base hospital with all the chance in the world to recover, and Becker and Higby were in the officers' mess cursing their bad luck over a glass of grog.

"For two cents I'd get me transferred to carrier fighters and do nothing but hunt out von Bluenose!" Becker grated for the second time in as many minutes. "A lucky burst, that's all it was. And poor Davis had to be in the way. Good man, too."

"One of the best," Higby agreed. "Wonder who we'll get to replace him. The Old Man told you, yet? You were talking to him right after we took Davis to sick bay."

"He didn't say a word about that," Becker grunted, and made a face. "Just redoubled his orders for us to get Bluenose and *Red Cap*. Us being the only ones that have really run across *Red Cap*, the Old Man seems to figure it's up to us to turn the trick."

"Easy!" Higby said with a sign. "I got it all figured out. Next time, we let Bluenose shoot us down, and we'll crash on top of *Red Cap*. Just like that. Nuts! If only one or the other would stay in one spot long enough—But, I suppose they wouldn't want to do that, would they?"

"Skip it, funny boy!" Becker

growled. "*Red Cap* can wait. Me, I'm really going after von Bluenose! This is the third time, now, I've left the gunners do most of the shooting. Next time—well, at least I can't do any worse. Oh-oh! Who's this?"

A short, stocky youth had entered the room to come to a halt and cast Irish blue eyes about. His uniform said he was an ensign, but his flaming red hair, freckled face, and large bony hands seemed to suggest that he had maybe spent more time in a boxing ring than in the navy.

Finally his eyes lighted on Becker, and a mouthful of white teeth showed in a broad grin. He came across the



room like a destroyer under a full head of steam. He pulled up short, started to speak, then seemed to remember he should salute first.

"Lieutenant Becker, sir?" he asked, with an awful lot of Dublin in his voice.

"The same," Becker replied with a nod.

"I'm Casey," the redhead said. "Ensign Casey reporting. The Skipper said I was to report to you. I'm your new gunner. Kinda tough about that kid, wasn't it? Oh, well, a guy's liable to get clipped when it ain't cream puffs they're heaving around. There's just one thing, though, Lieutenant. I'd like to pick my own parachute, if it's okay by you, huh?"

Becker swallowed the chuckle that rose to his lips and looked the redhead in the eye.

"If words were bullets, Casey," he said, "you'd be a big help right now. Why do you want to pick your own 'chute?"

Casey grinned and shrugged. "Yeah, they always did say I was kind of gabby," he said. "But I feel better,

getting the words out. I want to pick my 'chute so I'll know I'm getting the best. No, don't get me wrong, Lieutenant. I don't mean the Navy 'chutes are junk. I'm just particular, that's all. You see, it's been my racket, now, for about ten years."

"What has?" Higby spoke up. "Being a particular fellow?"

CASEY'S friendly grin broadened. "Sounded like that, didn't it?" he said. "Nope, Lieutenant. Parachutes. I guess I've jumped more times than a whole year's crop of grasshoppers. Got my pilot's license back in Thirty-three but didn't have the dough to keep a plane in gas and oil. So I took up 'chute jumping. You know, county fairs, air meets, and stuff. I did okay, too. I got to be good. Would you believe it?"

"We'll try," Becker murmured, as the redhead paused to catch his breath. "What?"

"I learned all the angles to 'chute jumping," Casey said without a trace of boastfulness in his voice. "I got so I could do the darnedest thing with 'em. Look. You could spread a small table cloth on a field, see? You could dump me out at eight hundred feet and one or both of my feet would be touching



that table cloth when I landed. I've done it hundreds of times, I guess. It was my 'chute jumping that got me in the Navy."

"When was that?" Becker asked with a straight face.

"Three months ago," was the instant reply. "I was doing some exhibition jumping down Jacksonville, Florida, way. Commander Wallace saw me do my stuff and looked me up afterward. Said he could use me to instruct in Naval Aviation. Well, it looked like

we'd be in it with both feet soon. So I said to myself, why not? I didn't have any argument against that, so I signed up, and a month later they made me an ensign. Gee! A mug like me, an officer in Naval Aviation! I wake up every morning figuring somebody's just kidding me."

"They don't kid in the Navy," Becker said solemnly. "Not that way, anyway. You got promotion because you rated it. You can believe that for fact, Casey. But what are you doing up here as a gunner?"

The grin on Casey's face died away, and it became set and grim like freckled granite.

"A home-town pal of mine was on the *Reuben James*," he said, tight-lipped. "He isn't going home, ever. I was pretty good with a machine-gun, too. I put in a request to be posted to duty up here. It was granted. And—well, here I am."

"And welcome, Casey," Becker said, putting out his hand. "We're not forgetting the *Reuben James*, either. Lieutenant Higby and I both had friends aboard her. I've got a hunch you'll do all right."

Casey flushed with embarrassment, then shook the Lieutenant's hand.

"Thanks, sir," he said. "I'll do my best. And I'll double that when we get into action."

It could be said that the Nazis heard of Ensign Casey's being posted to active duty with the Navy patrol out of Reykjavik, and suspended sea and air operations while they went into a huddle on the matter. But that, of course, would be stretching it pretty much. However, it so happened that for the next six days not a single American eye spotted von Bluenose or *Red Cap*. And it also happened that during that time not a single surface ship had so much as a scare alarm.

Rumors flew thick and fast. The British Navy had spotted *Red Cap* sneaking safely back to a French port. *Red Cap* had been caught in the South Atlantic and sent to the bottom. It

had been sunk in the Indian Ocean, in the China Sea, off Norway, in the Thames River, and even in the Hudson opposite Forty-second Street. All in all, *Red Cap* had taken quite a lot of sinking, but in every case there wasn't so much as a whisper of confirmation. The only thing certain was that nobody saw her in Icelandic waters. Nor did anybody see von Bluenose, either.

AND so, on the seventh day of Ensign Casey's patrol career Becker took off for another routine eighteen-hour sweep over hundreds of square miles of icy North Atlantic. Perhaps the sky should have been taken as an omen of things to come. It was as dirty as soiled laundry. Smudgy cloud scud spread from horizon to horizon, and to the north were slate-grey streaks that meant snow flurries if the wind should change.

For the first three hours, the sun tried hard to break through and light up the world a little. But the cloud scud was stubborn and the best the sun could do was a filtered pale glow that was little better than nothing at all. And from any altitude above eight thousand feet the ocean looked like grey-backed glass smeared with daubs of tar.

Truly a rotten day for flying, and it touched everybody's nerves, except Casey's. The redhead was his usual gabby self. At least, for the first few hours. After that period of time, he seemed to catch on to the idea he didn't have an audience today. So he clammed up considerably and concentrated on his self-appointed task of manning the flying boat's galley.

It was noon and he was bringing hot soup forward to Higby and Becker when he suddenly stopped short and almost slopped the soup all over the instrument panel.

"Hey, give a look!" he yelled. "To port and down. What's that down there? Holy catfish! That ain't no warm water streak!"

Becker started violently, bent for-

ward and fastened his eyes to port and below. For several seconds he saw nothing but streaked water. In fact, he was just about to snap Casey off when he saw the cigar-shaped streak that was darker than the rest and evenly outlined. Another good look and he breathed a prayer that his eyes were not playing him tricks.

But if they were, so were Higby's, because the co-pilot's voice shook with wild excitement.

"A sub, for sure!" he cried. "And not one of ours, either. It's a U-boat. It's— Hey! That's *Red Cap*. You can see the conning-tower hatch now. It's open. And it's red. Casey! Remind me to get you a medal for those eyes of yours."

Casey dropped the soup, but nobody noticed it.

"Heck with a medal!" he shouted. "My machine-gun. That's all I need, now!"

He started to leap aft, but Becker stopped him cold.

"Hold it!" the commander barked. "We don't go hog-wild on this ship, Casey. Get aft to your gun, but hold your fire until orders. Got that?"

"Yeah, sure, Lieutenant," the redhead gulped. "But, please don't forget them orders. Look! Gee! Them rats is even out on deck. It'll be like ten pins, and—"

"Shut up, and get aft!" Becker rasped. "Ready at the guns, but hold your fire until orders. We've got bombs aboard for *Red Cap*."

While Becker had barked out his orders, he hadn't taken his eyes off the U-boat below for an instant. As a matter of fact, he had throttled down engines and started the PBY toward lower altitude. Every split second of the time he expected to see the figures on deck race to the conning tower, and the U-boat to crash dive for safety. But nothing like that happened, and wild joy leaped high in Becker's chest.

He turned to the co-pilot, Lieutenant Higby. "Make sure! Higby, make sure!" he said as the co-pi-

lot slipped forward to the bomb sight in the nose. "They don't see us yet, because of the clouds. That gives us plenty of time. Make sure, and get her with the first egg."

"And how, and how!" Higby gulped. "Is this what the doctor ordered! Take us down, and I'll plunk it right in the conning tower hatch. She's not making a foot of headway. Just taking the swells. You'd think they'd hear us!"

Becker made no reply to that. He throttled his engines even more to kill the sound, and steepened his dive to present an even smaller edge-on view to those on the deck of the submarine. But as foot after foot of air rushed past the wings a hollow, empty feeling built itself up in his stomach.

It was not because he was squeamish about dropping death and destruction on unsuspecting men. Not in the slightest. When you were fighting slimy rats, you had to fight them their style. No, it was something else that built up the feeling in his stomach, and seemed actually to carry it up into his brain. It was a sort of frustrated feeling. The sensation of being cheated. A feeling of empty triumph. It—

And then suddenly, it happened!

A bit of white went climbing up the conning tower mast of the U-boat. A white flag that could mean only one thing. Surrender! The Nazis down there didn't want bombs on their heads; bombs that would cave in their plates like egg shells. They were quitting cold without a single show of fight.

Disgust, disappointment, and rage surged up in Becker. He automatically swerved slightly to port, pulled the ship's nose up and began slowly circling the U-boat with its red conning-tower hatch. Higby took his eyes from the bomb sight, and twisted around to look back at Becker.

"I don't see any white flag!" he called out. "And that bow gun is trained on us, isn't it?"

Becker pulled down one corner of his mouth in a grimace, and shook his head.

"Nothing doing, Higby," he said. "Lord knows they rate even worse. But he's hauled his colors, so I can't let him have it."

Higby clenched and unclenched one fist. From the look on his face it was plain he was thinking of a certain U. S. destroyer and a certain Army transport.

"I didn't hear your order," he said. "And—"

"It's still, no!" Becker said harshly. "We just can't do it, like that. She's either surfaced for repairs, and we've stumbled on her. Or maybe she didn't sight us until too late. Either way, we can't blow her up. The British didn't that time they caught one, you know."

"Who cares what the British did!" Higby growled, but he was slowly nodding his head in agreement.

Becker caught up the inter-com mouthpiece and barked into it.

"All hands hold their fire!" he called out. "We'll circle her until destroyers arrive. Keep your guns trained. If a man moves, give him a warning burst. Don't shoot to kill unless they ask for it. Check back these orders!"

"Orders received — dammit!" came Casey's voice over the intercom.

BECKER'S jaw tightened for a moment, but he let it go. Plenty of time, later, to put a bit more Navy discipline in Ensign Casey. He hung up the mouthpiece and went to work on the radio. He picked up a destroyer group within fifty miles of his position. His news was received with a yelp of wild joy, and in his mind's eye he could see those sleek, knife-bowed terriers of the Navy practically whirl in keel length and leap forward. He signed off with a heavy sigh and continued to stare reproachfully down at the motionless figures on the deck of the U-boat.

The flying boat was only eight hundred feet up, now, and he could clearly see one Nazi with gold on his sea cap—the U-boat's commander. He was standing within spitting distance of the

conning-tower hatch, but he didn't so much as turn his head that way. He stood straddle-legged, hands jammed in his jacket pockets, and his head tilted back, looking up at the circling PBY.

"Just like it shouldn't be!" Becker groaned softly. "They've killed a thousand souls, probably. And when it comes their turn, all they'll get is internment camp for the duration. If I could only be a dirty louse for just one minute, and give Higby the word. I'd —"

"Trouble! And coming fast!"

Higby's cry was a hoarse scream. The co-pilot still in the nose at the bomb sight hadn't bothered to turn his head. He was staring to starboard and up. And pointing a stiff arm in that direction. Becker knew what he would see even before he could move his eyes. And he was not wrong. It was like looking into a mirror of the past. A good six miles to starboard, and a good nine thousand feet in the air was the unmistakable silhouette of a Messerschmitt 110 in the act of wheeling around and down into a dive.

Its distance made it jet black against the cloud scud, but Becker knew that there were no markings on that ship. Knew it as sure as he knew he was sitting at the controls of a PBY. It was jet black with a robin's egg blue nose on the fuselage.

Once again history was repeating itself. They had sighted *Red Cap*—this time, cold mutton—and here was von Bluenose popping down out of nowhere. It was an easy guess that the U-boat had radioed the lone Nazi plane that constantly acted as its protector. And it was also an easy guess that the U-boat was counting on von Bluenose to polish off the PBY and get them out of a jam before the destroyers came over the horizon.

As that thought came to him, Becker impulsively took his eyes off the approaching Messerschmitt and searched the horizon to the west. But there was only cloud scud, not a single thread of

black destroyer smoke. No destroyers would come in time to take over the U-boat. It was strictly up to those aboard the flying boat to accomplish the impossible. And that was exactly how it shaped up! Impossible!

If they continued to circle the U-boat, with their guns trained on it for false moves, the Messerschmitt would shoot them to ribbons. If they cut away and gave battle to the Messerschmitt, it was almost certain that the U-boat would make a supreme effort to get below water, regardless of why she had come to surface.

One choice was his, and only one. He could save the PBY and crew and get the Messerschmitt. Or he could lose the flying boat and their lives, probably, and get the Nazi deep sea marauder as it tried to escape.

Yes, of course there was one other thing he could do, and even as he savagely thrust it from his mind Higby called to him from the flying boat's nose.

"We've got to get them quick!" the co-pilot begged. "That Messerschmitt won't let us sit over this thing forever. Bear a hair to port, and I'll dump the load. For heaven's sake, Jack, we can't let *Red Cap* get away!"

TORTURE was like white hot flames searing Becker's whole body. It would be so simple, so easy to give Higby the nod and let him blow that U-boat to high heaven and back. But there just wasn't anything rotten enough in him to let him give the order.

He knew that under reverse conditions the Nazis wouldn't even hesitate, nor would the Wops, or the slant-eyed lice of the Rising Sun. But he couldn't do it. He was an American, and it wasn't the American way. The U-boat had surrendered. The white flag still fluttered from the conning-tower mast.

True, if it should try to escape—But, it was making no effort to do that. Not one of the figures on deck had apparently so much as moved a

muscle. But the instant he started tangling with the Messerschmitt, and had worked away from the U-boat—

"Becker! I know how you feel, man, but think of those that sub has killed off. Man, we can't let it get away!"

Higby was shouting at the top of his voice. He had come aft a few steps and was pounding a fist on Becker's knee. And all the pleading possible in one human being flooded his eyes. Becker gave him an agonized look, and doggedly shook his head.

"We're not murderers, Higby!" he said harshly. "We can't sit up here and slaughter them. We've got to take the chance of beating off that Messerschmitt and getting at them before they can go under. We—"

He cut off the rest as a red-headed, freckle-faced tornado came sailing into the pilots' compartment. Casey had helmet and goggles on his head. He wore a seat parachute, and in his big hands he carried one of the ship's sub-machine-guns that are standard equipment on patrol bombers in case a landing party should become necessary. Both Becker and Higby gaped at him in amazement, but the ensign gunner didn't wait for them to speak. He pulled up short and stabbed a stiff forefinger at Becker.

"Get down to six hundred!" he cried. "Head toward that tin fish from stern to bow. I'll pile out and handle it while you bust up that Messerschmitt. Get going, Lieutenant. We ain't got a second to waste!"

"You're mad, insane!" Becker gasped. "Get aft to your post, Casey. You'll—"

"We're in a jam!" the redhead cut him off, eyes snapping. "Do as I'm telling you, and don't worry about me. I can land on a dime from six hundred. Look, Lieutenant, it's our only chance. It's a cinch. Once I'm free of the ship, I can knock their eyebrows off if they so much as take a deep breath."

In the distance came the savage yammer of aerial machine-gunfire, punctuated by the deeper note of air cannon.

Becker swallowed hard and tried to find his voice.

Higby beat him to it.

"It's worth the try, Becker!" he cried. "We can't stall forever. Let Casey try it. He's—"

"You're darn right, I am!" Casey cut in. "I'll hit that deck like a feather and keep them covered while you polish off the Nazi plane. I'm telling you, I'll do it. We're in a jam and—"

The redhead shot a glance down over the side, and then wheeled around.

"And I'm gone!" he roared.

BECKER opened his mouth, but it wasn't the words he had formed in his mind that came out. He changed them even as his tongue started to move.

"Aft to the hull door with him, Higby!" he thundered. "Yell the word the instant the fool is clear. Then get forward to the bow guns. We'll at least keep that Messerschmitt away from him. Hop to it, fella!"

His mouth full of curses and dry sobs, Becker dropped the ship down to six hundred feet, then heeled around and headed straight for the stern of the U-boat with the wind. Out the corner of his eye he saw the Messerschmitt pilot angling around to a good attack position, but he continued to hold the flying boat steady as a rock. Down on the U-boat's deck the motionless figures had crouched slightly. It was as if they expected bombs now, and were ready to leap far out into the sea the instant the eggs left the racks.

A million and one thoughts blazed up in Becker's brain. In his heart he blessed Casey for stubbornly seeking this one way out of the jam. In his brain he cursed him for the reckless, undisciplined man that he was. But it was a possible way out. One man's life against success, and the redhead wasn't letting anybody's orders stop him.

It was one of those rare cases when all the rules and regulations in

the world didn't mean a thing. A case when a man's courage and daring were more important than anything else.

"All clear!"

Higby's words had not even started their echo when the co-pilot leaped past Becker and practically dived for the electric gun turret in the ship's nose. In that same instant, Becker heeled the big boat way over and went slamming around and straight at the Messerschmitt starting down in its close-quarters diving attack. His thumb rested on the trigger button of his own guns, but Becker didn't press it, although Higby's guns had started to snarl.

He took out just a couple of split-seconds to twist his head and look down and back. A disc of white hung in the air, and under it was the dangling figure of Ensign Casey. The redhead held his submachine-gun with one hand and was climbing up the shroud lines with the other. He seemed less than a hundred feet above the stern of the U-boat.

THE figures on deck had straightened, but had not otherwise moved. Becker saw a line of white dots run along the water a foot from the U-boat's side, and it wasn't until he had jerked his head forward that he realized Casey was letting the Nazis know he could pick off the very first man that moved.

"If he only makes that deck, if he only does!" Becker prayed through clenched teeth, and heaved the controls over to swing the PBY around so the aft gunners could get a sight on the Messerschmitt that was zooming out of Higby's devastating fire.

Even as he worked the Dep wheel every bit of him yearned to find out what Casey was doing, but he savagely refused to waste even a few precious seconds. Casey was staking his life to give him the chance to tackle with the Messerschmitt. The least he could do was to make good for the redhead's sake.

A FEW moments later, however, when the aft gunners broke up another diving attack by the Messerschmitt, and Becker had worked the PBY between it and the U-boat below, he had a brief moment for another look. What he saw brought a cry of joy and wild pride to his lips.

Casey had made it. Casey was free of his parachute and stood firmly planted on the deck of the U-boat. All of the figures on deck were down on their faces, except one. The lone exception was the craft's commander. He was on his knees facing the conning tower with both hands raised above his head. And no more than six inches from the back of his head was the muzzle of Ensign Casey's machine-gun.

Becker took one quick glance and then a cry of sharp alarm burst from his lips. The U-boat was moving! The U-boat's bow was cutting through the water and sending white spray aft along either side!

It took every ounce of Becker's will-power to make his eyes tear themselves from the heart-chilling scene and return to the Messerschmitt. It was coming down again. Coming down like a shaft of black light for one last desperate all-out attack.

Higby's guns were pounding out bullets, and a shower of destruction blazed out from the blister guns aft. But like a thing possessed, the Messerschmitt kept on coming down. And coming down in an obvious maneuver to either get in under the flying boat for a belly blast—or to go right on down toward Casey standing flat-footed on the U-boat's deck.

"No, he won't, Casey! Not in a hundred thousand years, boy!"

Becker hardly heard his own voice. It was no more than a jumbled murmur that came from a great distance. He didn't even know what he said, and he didn't try to recall what it was. Higby and the blister gunners were shooting from a bad angle. Their

(Continued on page 111)

UNITED STATES NAVY SCALE

Uncle Sam Wants 500,000 Model Planes—Do Your Share by Building as Many of Them as You Can! It's Great Fun—and a Worth-While Patriotic Service!



HERE is another opportunity for you fellows to do a real part in America's

great war effort. You've been building model planes for your own amusement. Now you can take part in the United States Navy's scale model construction project! AIR WAR Magazine, with its active group of young air enthusiasts, is cooperating in the achievement of the Navy's goal of 500,000 models for the emergency.

In order that we may bring as many of the detailed plans as possible to our readers, we are presenting plans not only in this issue of AIR WAR but also many other plans in our companion air magazines—SKY FIGHTERS, THE AMERICAN EAGLE and RAF ACES.

The July issue of SKY FIGHTERS includes not only the plans, but the complete, detailed step-by-step procedure for building these scale model aircraft in 44 easy-to-understand detailed figure drawings.



On the pages following, you will find a set of three complete templates of the plans necessary for constructing three different planes. The one-page and two-page templates are exact as to size and scale according to the Navy's requirements. The final assembly models have been reduced in size.

You may trace or draw these templates and mount them on heavy cardboard or make careful copies of them on thin sheet metal. Suitable size envelopes should be provided to hold the templates, otherwise important parts may be lost. Each template should be listed to avoid loss. All work must be done exactly to plans. No minor details must be left off, nor must the model builder add details other than those specified in the plans. All details to be included are in the plans. *Exactness is essential.*

On each plan is given the details of the materials required for the particular model. This material may be white pine, ash, gum, poplar or similar wood. It should be straight-grained, well-seasoned, free of sap streaks, pith or knots.

Under no circumstances must balsa be used. While it is light, it is not suitable for scale model work for the military services, and is needed in the emergency for other purposes. In more fragile parts use maple or other hard wood. Tongue depressors or applicators, usually made of birch, obtainable from any drug store, may serve where hard wood is needed.

Local high schools and model clubs in your town are cooperating with this project, and your teacher will probably be able to help you. For model builders who have had any experience in this type of work, the use of the templates will be fairly simple. The fuselage is usually the first item taken up by the model builder. This job from the first step of marking out the templates on the solid block, rough chipping, shaping and sand-papering, must be done with extreme care.

The wings must also be given careful treatment, largely because of the fact that they are much more fragile than the bulkier fuselage. The markings of the guide lines and the job of shaping down the block to form with knife or plane must be attended to rather carefully.

Planes which require engine nacelles give you an opportunity for some real whittling and carving work. In all of these rounded portions of the plane, the model builder must check with the templates. Next comes the tail assembly. The stabilizer is the first piece cut out and is slipped in the fuselage slot before being shaped down and sandpapered. Your rudder is the next thing that must be worked out.

After all of these parts have been worked out to the requirements indicated on the



templates, it is your task to assemble the plane according to the final assembly plan.*

This is an excellent chance for patriotic young Americans to serve their country! We hope that you fellows and girls will build many flying models and become keenly interested in the future of aviation. **Keep 'Em Flying!**

* Step-by-step construction plans are in our companion magazine, SKY FIGHTERS, July issue; or you may be able to secure a copy of the U. S. Office of Education booklet, "Scale Model Aircraft Construction Procedure," from your school or model club.

MODEL AIRCRAFT PLANS

Here's How You Can Win an Honor Certificate and Be Rated as an Aircraftsman!

IN RECOGNITION of the patriotic work of young American model builders engaged on this project, the United States Navy will issue honor certificates. These will be awarded to boys and girls whose models pass inspection. They will award the honorary rank of "Aircraftsman."

Various ranks of Aircraftsman have been established, and the certificates awarded will indicate the rank of the model builder.

There are seven honor ranks, each one requiring particular types of completed models in order to merit the award.

They are as follows:

CADET AIRCRAFTSMAN—1 of any type of models complete.

ENSIGN AIRCRAFTSMAN—3 of any type of models completed, including a scout bomber or an observation plane.

LIEUTENANT AIRCRAFTSMAN (junior grade)—5 models completed, including one twin-engine bomber and planes from 2 nations.

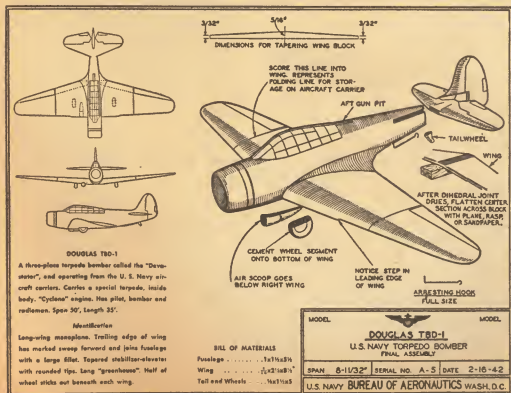
LIEUTENANT AIRCRAFTSMAN—7 models completed, including one seaplane or twin-fuselage fighter.

LIEUTENANT COMMANDER AIRCRAFTSMAN—8 models completed, including a torpedo bomber or biplane and including planes from 3 nations.

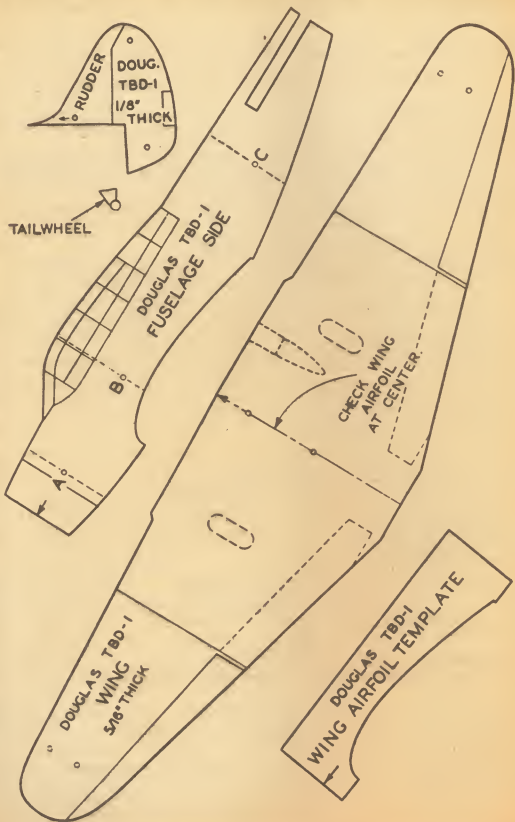
COMMANDER AIRCRAFTSMAN—9 models completed, including one four-engine bomber and including planes from 4 nations.

CAPTAIN AIRCRAFTSMAN—10 models completed, including planes from 5 nations and consisting of the following types: fighter, scout, bomber, observation plane, twin-engine bomber, seaplane, biplane, twin-fuselage fighter, torpedo bomber, four-engine army bomber and four-engine patrol bomber.

The requirements for the several certificates are cumulative, and the awards will be progressive. For example, to qualify as an Ensign Aircraftsman, the model builder must first have qualified as a Cadet Aircraftsman.



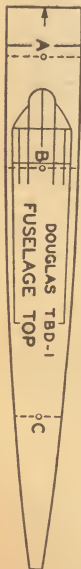
(Turn page for Templates of Douglas TBD-1)



This baby is a flying arsenal with its torpedo, armor-piercing bombs, free

DOUGLAS TBD-1
DIHEDRAL
GAUGE

TBD-1
COWL
FRONT



MAKE TWO WHEEL
SEGMENTS FROM
1/8" SHEET WOOD
WITH THIS PATTERN



MODEL

MODEL

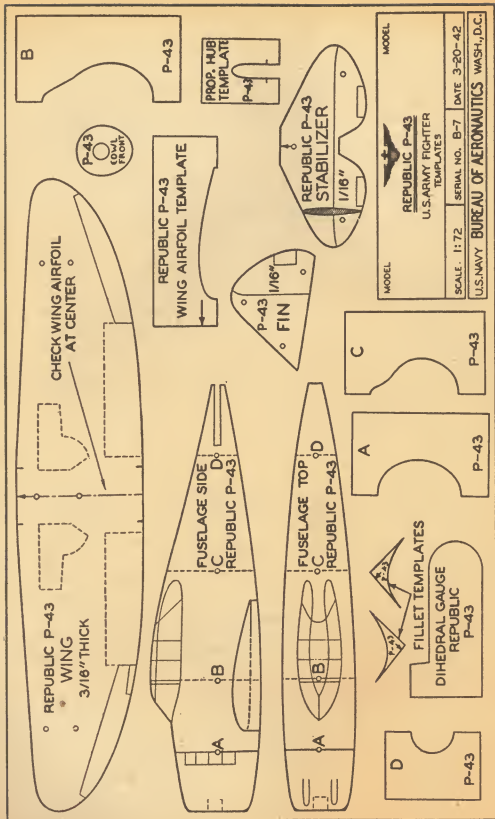
DOUGLAS TBD-1
U.S. NAVY TORPEDO BOMBER
TEMPLATES

SCALE 1:72

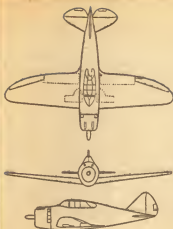
SERIAL NO A-5

DATE 2-16-42

U.S. NAVY BUREAU OF AERONAUTICS WASH., D.C.



Three and one half tons of fighting fury is this Republic Lancer, and when it sets out to help our bombers and Flying Fortresses pound away at the Japs and the Nazis, you'll find that it can do more than its share!

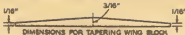


REPUBLIC P-43

The U.S. Army's "Lancer" is a single-seat fighter powered by a "Twin-Wasp" radial engine. Armed with light fragmentation bombs in addition to its machine guns. Span 36', Length 28' 5 1/4".

Identification

Low-wing monoplane with leading edge swept back slightly and curved trailing edge sweeping forward. Well rounded fuselage with pointed cabin above wing. Leading edges of tail surfaces swept back to curved tips and trailing edges.



FUSELAGE TAIL PLUG

FULL SIZE

TOP SIDE

COWL AND GILL LINES SCORED IN

GLUE STABILIZER IN FUSELAGE BUT. THEN GLUE ON TAIL PLUG AND SAND TO FLOW IN WITH FUSELAGE.

MACHINE GUN HOUSING

PROPELLER HUB

MACHINE GUN HOUSING FULL SIZE

TOP SIDE

WING FILLET

3/4" CUT TO FIT DIHEDRAL IN WING

NOTE: GLUE BOTTOM BLOCK IN PLACE BEFORE MAKING WING FILLET

BILL OF MATERIALS

Fuselage 1/2x1 1/2x4 1/2
Wing 1/2x1 1/2x6 1/2
Tail 1/2x1 1/2x3
Prop. Hub 1/2" dowel

MODEL

MODEL

REPUBLIC P-43

U.S. ARMY FIGHTER

FINAL ASSEMBLY

SPAN 6" SERIAL NO. B-7 DATE 3-20-42

U.S. NAVY BUREAU OF AERONAUTICS WASH., D.C.

(Templates for Republic P-43 on opposite page)

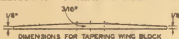


VOUGHT SIKORSKY OS2U-1

The U.S. Navy's "Kingfisher" is a two-place scout and observation plane equipped with single center pontoon and wing floats or with fixed two-wheel landing gear. Has a "Wasp Jr." engine. Span 35' 10-11 1/8", Length 33' 7-3 1/8".

Identification

Low mid-wing monoplane with trailing edge of wing swept forward. Large center pontoon on three web struts. Two wing floats on braced "N" struts. Long, interrupted "greenhouse" Tapering tail surfaces with round tips.



COWL SEPARATION SCORED IN

GLUE TOPS OF STRUTS INTO HOLES MADE IN WING AND FLOATS

BUILD UP STRUTS OVER PATTERN ON TEMPLATE SHEET

NOTICE FLAT SIDE ON WING FLOAT AND REAR OF PONTOON

CEMENT ENDS OF STRUTS INTO FUSELAGE AND FLOAT HOLES

BILL OF MATERIALS

Fuselage 1/2x1 1/2x5
Wing 1/2x1 1/2x6 1/2
Tail 1/2x1 1/2x4 1/2
Pontoon 1/2x1 1/2x4 1/2
Wing Floats 1/2x1 1/2x2 1/2
Float Struts 1/2" dia. dowel

MODEL

MODEL

VOUGHT SIKORSKY OS2U-1

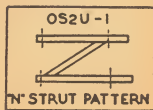
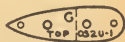
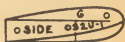
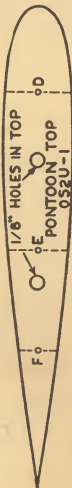
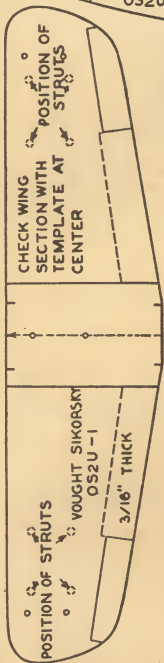
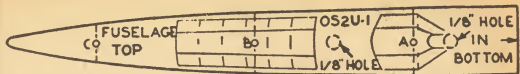
U.S. NAVY OBSERVATION SCOUT

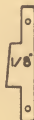
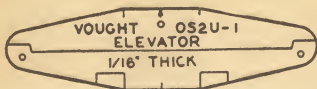
FINAL ASSEMBLY


SPAN 6" SERIAL NO. A-4 DATE 2-16-42

U.S. NAVY BUREAU OF AERONAUTICS WASH., D.C.

(Turn page for Templates of Vought Sikorsky OS2U-1)





MODEL			MODEL
VOUGHT SIKORSKY OS2U-1 U.S. NAVY OBSERVATION SCOUT TEMPLATES			
SCALE	1:72	SERIAL NO.	A-4
		DATE	2-16-42
U.S. NAVY BUREAU OF AERONAUTICS WASH., D.C.			

(Continued from page 11)

blonde sec. to hunt up all the drawings on hand and she has been gone for an hour now. If we find her helping the office boy spot foreign planes on the roof again, we will put in an ad for a redhead.

Nice letter, Ray. If you ever come down here just come in.

Comes a neat bit of sarcasm sprinkled with repentance. The originator of this paradoxical pamphlet is one Johnny Moore, Box 459, Fort Bayard, New Mexico. This painted desert pinnocchio pours it on!

After reading your article I consider those readers with clothes-plins lucky. You know, for the nose! But all joking aside, I have read your magazine for almost two years and I think it's swell. I also read THE AMERICAN EAGLE, R.A.F. ACES and SKY FIGHTERS.

I am a model builder also and have built lots of them.

But I have a complaint, Joey, Old Bean, please put some stories of flyers based on carriers in the Pacific, and some "Ambrose Hooley" stories in and in my opinion you'll have a swell Mag.

Also how about an original and a picture of you as my dog wants to get a good look at a soup bone.

We will overlook the way you addressed us, Johnny. But you like AIR WAR and our other magazines and that is all we worry about.

If your pöch wants a look at a soup-bone, send for a picture of Lt. Morgan. Three police logs ganged this author last week and tried to bury him. Maybe you'll get an original, Johnny, but please remember your manners.

An old lanceman of ours, John Janostak, 1157 Lakeview Ave., Detroit, Michigan, lowers his average with this effort. John cannot stand our being popular and he goes off the deep end with this tidy lump of libell!

In the Spring edition of AIR WAR you dared me to write again. Well, you moth-eaten candidate for the section of the Bronx Zoo containing anthropoids, I am, as you can easily see, sending one of my already famous love letters.

In last month's edition of your rag, the majority of the letters printed were more or less to your liking, so I have come to the conclusion that the myriad of letters you claimed couldn't be deciphered were thrown away simply because they were all against you.

The foot-note at the end of "Prop Bosh" is an excuse for keeping the truth from your readers who would turn against you "en masse" if they knew what the score was.

I'll bet that Zgarba guy, who says that Capt. Danger is his favorite character, still gets a thrill out of reading Jane Arden and Flash Gordon. Just imagine this—I for one can't believe it. He says quote, "Capt. Danger is my favorite character," unquote. I've really got to hand it to that guy who said miracles will never cease.

Zgarba calls Capt. Danger a character when any person in his right mind would call him a fantasy that Goya forgot to paint.

There is only one good thing I can say about your mag and that is that it is not quite as hard to take as R.A.F. ACES. I am going to write a letter to the Michigan Board of Sanitation suggesting that they use the gas arising from the burning of AIR WAR and R.A.F. ACES when fumigating, instead of cyanide.

Well I have run out of compliments for you for the time being and so for the good of God and Country, I again go into three (3) months of peace, quiet, and RECUPERATION after reading the latest issue of your publication. Where in — are those originals?

We resent your implication, pal! We print everything, as our motto is, "Everything that gives us fits, we print."

You don't like Capt. Danger. All right; we don't like a certain brand of toothpaste, but the company that makes it declared an extra dividend last month. Catch on, John?

Keep on writing, Johnny. We know you must be kidding.

Tsk-tsk. We thought typewriters were being frozen and here is the fourth typed opus. Stewart "Apple-Jack" Mackes, 180 Schley Street, Newark, N. J., wants to go on record as having said:

I used to read AIR WAR about once every year, but a few months ago I started to build model airplanes as a hobby. Well, that started my interest in airplane stories. I am now an ardent reader of AIR WAR and can hardly wait till it gets out.

I like the different letters printed in Prop Wash and think some guys are crazy when they write that A. W. should have more World War I stories than modern stories (or vice-versa). I think that A. W. is all right as it is with its different various stories, and that bull about how the authors gave their heroes too many chances. It wouldn't be interesting if they didn't. B—u—t—, I think it would improve your mag a lot if you had the covers drawn so that you could see a complete airplane and not just the wings or tail.

Please send a picture of yourself and enroll me in the club.

Okay, Stew. We'll speak to the artist as some of the letters that follow yours have the same beef. We agree with you when you disagree with the fresh customers who insist on reviling our honest efforts.

Like this next goon for instance. Bob Havlik of Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin. He questions our right to be listed as a human being. Frogeyes, see that the boss does not get this one:

I bet you were raised on a bottle but not of milk.

I just finished the Fall issue of AIR WAR, CAPTAIN DANGER'S DEATH PATROL isn't quite as bad as some of the fellows that write to you think. I agree with some of the drips that write to you who say your mag should have World War I stories in it. I think Douglas Kles should dip his head in a bucket of lye, because I just can't get my fill of World War I stories.

I think this fellow Byrnes must be a nice fellow if he insults you the way I think he does.


Well I think I have insulted you enough. When will the next issue be out?

Bob likes Byrnesey. Ever since we took up first aid, we have sent First Degree Byrnes a tube of tannic acid jelly to use on his mush before retiring every night. You will hear from Douglas Kies, Bob, I hope. You just can't wait for the next issue either! Make up your mind!

From the dumps to seventh heaven we boom with this nice short one from Joseph Brown, 4630—189th Street, Flushing, L. I. Joe likes everything we do. You tell 'em, Joe!

Enclosed find three covers from your magazines. Will you please send me pictures of World War Aces? I have just started to read your books and I think they are swell. The one I like the best of all is AIR WAR, then SKY

(Continued on page 104)



KNOWLEDGE
THAT HAS
ENDURED WITH THE
PYRAMIDS

A SECRET METHOD FOR THE MASTERY OF LIFE

WHENCE came the knowledge that built the Pyramids and the mighty Temples of the Pharaohs? Civilization began in the Nile Valley centuries ago. Where did its first builders acquire their astounding wisdom that started man on his upward climb? Beginning with naught they overcame nature's forces and gave the world its first sciences and arts. Did their knowledge come from a race now submerged beneath the sea, or were they touched with Infinite inspiration? From what concealed source came the wisdom that produced such characters as Amenhotep IV, Leonardo da Vinci, Isaac Newton, and a host of others?

Today it is known that they discovered and learned to interpret certain *Secret Methods* for the development of their inner power of mind. They learned to command the inner forces within their own beings, and to master life. This secret art of living has been preserved and handed down throughout the ages. Today it is extended to those who dare to use its profound principles to meet and solve the problems of life in these complex times.

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which I shall read as directed.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

PROP WASH

(Continued from page 102)

FIGHTERS, AMERICAN EAGLE, R.A.F. ACES. Here's to your continued success and give us more stories like FIATS OVER ALBANIA and EXILED WINGS.

You will get those stories, Joe. Thanks for making the Wisconsin Rapids client feel ashamed of his written paper. Frog-eyes tosses us a long-winded stint from John Ternjofer (that's what it looks like!). Outside of an impertinent question, John does a good job of writing. We think it worthy of publication. So here it comes right at you!

First of all I'd like to know if the Joe Archibald who writes your "Prop Wash" section is the same pen herder who writes for a rival air mag. From the way his column reads, it must be the same bum as there can be but one nut in this country that dangerous who is allowed the privilege of shooting off his face in public, so to speak.

All kidding aside though, you've really got a swell magazine. I've just finished your Spring issue (including Prop Wash) and I think it's O.K. just as it is. If that loud-mouthed bum, Sydney O'Connor from Penn., ever happens out this way I'll personally outfit him with a knotty-pine overcoat and ship him home in same. If anybody don't like a mag the way it's printed, they sure don't have to buy it.

However, I agree with some of the fellows in that some of your illustrations are not just what the doctor ordered. In your Spring issue, the "Ed Smalle" illustration for ONE LIFE FOR ALL is really what they all should be like, authentic drawings of the planes used in the stories. I, myself, am somewhat of an illustrator having sold some of my pictures around here to model builders and aviation enthusiasts. Enclosed you will find a sample of what us Kan-

sans can do if we want to. I'll swap you this one for one of yours, how about it, chum?

Hoping you meet with continued success in the publication of your magazine, I'll sign off.

Maybe you've got two guys mixed up. If you read the sport pages, you will see where Joey Archibald does a lot of prize-fighting out of Pawtucket, R. I. Now keep on guessing, you smart Alex!

Joe Archibald is such a famous name that a lot of people take it for an alias. We used it when we were picked up by some M.P.'s in France and have hung onto it ever since. That is why our war record has always been so mixed up. But forgetting personalities, your letter was a masterpiece, John. We will see if we can oblige you with an original.

Your kick anent the Mike Angelos who illustrate our stories has been tagged for an exec. meeting. Enough for you. The mail-bag isn't deflated a bit yet.

Let's take some of the verbal bombs in sticks. Here are three short but potent bursts from the following customers. All of you Hangar-ons pay attention to them. They are from John Paul Stauter, Jr., 630 E. Brill St., Philadelphia, Penn.; Richard Knoerlein, 2627 Chesterfield Ave., Baltimore, Maryland; and Richard King, Gates Center, Kansas.

Please enroll me as a member of "The Alr-men of America." But between you and me and the four walls of this Nlssen I do not like the idea of females trying to turn this man's mag into a mushy love book.

With my Lewis packed away in cosmaline, I don't think I ought to ask you to print this letter in the mag, for I could not defend myself

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Address

City State

against the artillery these females carry.—John Paul Stauter, Jr.

What are the English? Haven't they any scientists? No mad doctors? Capture the one Captain Danger always gets in his stories! He's terrible! The rest of your stories are good. How about more World War I stories? How about an occasional story about newsreel cameramen that fly? Or men that take pictures in Hollywood? HOW ABOUT BETTER STORIES? —Richard Knoerlein.

I have just finished the Spring issue of AIR WAR, and I think it is a super mag. I have also read your SKY FIGHTERS and AMERICAN EAGLE mags, they are both fine. I hope you will print some more World War I stories. —Richard King.

Johnny Stauter asked us not to print his letter as he is afraid of the cupcakes who want a say in AIR WAR. But we couldn't resist, Johnny.

Dick Knoerlein wants better stories. We'll try, pal. Dick King claims they suit him fine. That's the way it goes. We try to please everybody, even the boss. That is easy like trying to find a couple of pieces of buckshot in a barrel of Russky caviar.

But let us give Vaughn Hunt the spotlight. This is the kind of client that keeps our feed bag filled. Vaughn lives in a town that must be a nice Aroma. Yes, East Lyndall St., Aroma, Mo. Get a load of this.

I have just finished the Spring issue of AIR WAR, and I don't think there is a better magazine on the market. I am sorry to say that this is only the third issue I have read, and hate to think of all the good reading I have missed by not starting sooner. Now that I have started I can't go in a drug store without buying a magazine. I have THE AMERICAN EAGLE, SKY FIGHTERS, and R.A.F. ACES still to read.

There seems to be a question about whether or not you should put World War I stories in this mag. I say keep it in this war, as we get all about the other one in history.

Everyone is voting on a name for the club, so my vote is in for Air Warriors. I would like to be a member in it.

Good hunting. Let us hop to a very polite guy named Jack Dean who blacks out in case of a raid at 4201 Newhall Street, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Jack wants better draftsmanship and claims our artists should be drafted. So give a look, ink splashers!

I'm writing this place to tell you how much I like AIR WAR. I think your mags have got everything. But—the artists can be used as a tow target as far as their drawings are concerned! In the Spring issue of AIR WAR, Mr. Ed Smalle has the only decent drawing in the mag.

After reading about the wonderful Messups 109-F, Spitfires, Hurricanes and Heinkels to look at a corny illustration burns you up. In AIR WAR Turk Hanlon is a raw filer at Clark Field. In the drawing of him he looks like a seasoned veteran with pimples all over his kisser. This doesn't fit into the story at all. So here's to better artists!

Contents noted, Jack. Ed Smalle ought to be good for a touch, huh? We have called a washboard meeting of our artists and it looks like some of them will have to polish up on planes. We don't intend to pull our punches. Thanks for your interest.

The complaints still come in and here is another one from Ernie Badt, 3998 W. 222d

[Turn page]

FREE to PEOPLE WHO WANT to WRITE



Bus Driver Sells 8 Stories

"Since reporting the sale of my first attempt at a magazine article, I have sold three others, also four feature stories were accepted by the local newspaper. The credit is all yours. When you consider that I'm a driver for the local bus company, you can readily see my time is well taken up."

—Herman R. Bach,
Box 115,
Pacife Grove, Calif.

...but can't get started

So many people with the "germ" of writing in them fear that a beginner hasn't a chance. Some suffer from inertia. Or they set up imaginary barriers to taking the first step. Many believe the field is confined to persons gifted with a genius for writing. Few realize that actually the great bulk of commercial writing is done by so-called "unknowns" . . . thousands of men and women producing not

only most published fiction, but countless articles on business, homemaking, hobbies, travels, sports, recipes, human interest stories, etc. Such material is in constant demand. Every week thousands of checks for \$25, \$50 and \$100 go out to writers whose latent ability was perhaps no greater than yours.

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St., Fairview, Ohio. Ernie is crazy about AIR WAR and wants better drawings.

I have just finished the Spring issue of AIR WAR, and I think it's great.

Why is AIR WAR printed only quarterly? It's such a swell mag that it should at least be printed bi-monthly.

In Prop Wash last issue some fellow (Sydney O'Connor by name) mentioned something about a fellow who can really draw pictures. Half of the time, you can't tell whether it's a Spitfire, a Hurricane, or a P-40. As he suggested, why not Blackleses?

Also, may I suggest that you offer some award for the best letters, such as original drawings, etc.

I wrote several issues ago, and asked for a picture of one Joseph Archibald, and you said O.K., but none came. How about it?

Like you have already noticed, Ernie, we are still waiting for the photos from Fifth Ave. It is a place where the Goulds and Vanderswells get theirs taken. Oh, oh, we were just told the boss got the bill for them and won't pay such an outrageous price for facsimiles of our war map. We will have to get the scratch up somewhere.

So be patient, Ernie. Your billet doux will receive the attention of the art director here. The long hair is having a fit right now.

Every once in a while we get a letter we cherish very highly and put in our personal file. Such a sample of genteel literature comes to our attention right now. It was sent to us—unsolicited, mind you—from George F. Gillis, 931 Denver St., East Liverpool, Ohio. Cast your eyes on this perfect sample of polite penmanship, you zombies who poison your pens.

I have just finished reading your March issue. I am very sorry to say it's the first time I ever read your mag.

The first thing I read was "Prop Wash." Personally, I believe it is one of the best columns I have read for a long time. After reading some of the letters in the column I've come to the conclusion that we need more institutions for the feeble minded. How people can kick about such a good publication is beyond me.

I think the note about the parachute troops was very good. While on the subject, why don't you have stories about this organization. I'm sure they would not only prove to be good reading but would also raise more interest in the troops.

What's this I read about your passing out some original drawings? I suppose these are just for your old, steady readers. If you want to pass some out to a new reader sometime remember that I would appreciate them very much.

Well, you have my congratulations for a swell magazine.

We were never more pleased since we were decorated for bravery for an amazing aerial feat over Metz in 1918. We had only a couple of squirts left in our Vickers. A very brave pilot named Washout Bowser and yours truly were set upon by twelve Fokkers that were new out of the factory and we—but we do not want to spoil Mr. Gillis' opinion of us making him think we are a braggard. Thanks, George. If we have enough originals to go around, you will get your share.

Another familiar name meets our tired old eyes, astigmatized by squinting through so many Vickers' sights. Danny Edelstein of 967 Aldus St., New York City, N. Y., keeps himself in good standing by this neat fimsy.

AIR WAR and SKY FIGHTERS are tops on my list. You've been wanting a name for your club. Well, here's my choice. It's not a fancy name, but it will be a small tribute to a great American. How about "The Colin Kelly Club"?

There is a little thing you can do for us readers. You could put the date of the next issue on the table of contents. It would help fellows who haunt the newstands, waiting for the next issue to come out.

Could you send me a photo of yourself and some originals of yours? Thanks a lot.

Nice idea, Danny, we'll consider it. And a pretty swell suggestion for a club name. Your letter is marked **URGENT**—Take Notice. This meeting would not be complete if we did not get a chance to read a message from the sorority briefing rooms.

Dorothy Mills, P.O. Box 77, Green Cove Springs, Florida, pushes the males aside and has her say. Dorothy understands us better than the doll out in the greenhouse. Call in our secretary and let her get in on this one:

I bought a new issue of **AIR WAR** not long ago and enjoyed it. But—I rather think that Captain Danger is a bit too fantastic—but I enjoyed it just the same. And as for the rest of the stories, they're grand; especially **TOP FLIGHT SOLDIER** in the March issue. I also like your Prop Wash and wish you would set me down as a prospective pen pal for anyone who cares to write.

I'm an aviation enthusiast and that's self-explanatory. My hobbies are, in order of preference, aviation (actual and model), music, and photography. Long life to your magazine, and I think **Air Warriors** is a good name for the club.

Come in any time, Dottie. Don't believe what they say about your C.O. being a wolf. Just because we were such a hero in France, the gals flocked to us. We did not chase them at all. Pen Pals, you heard what Dorothy said!

A guy with a funny first name, Nanny Ledet, 201 Homer St., Algiers, La., mentions an old friend of ours who gave up his life helping to get planes to England. Mr. Ledet writes:

I've been reading **AIR WAR** and I think it's swell. But it doesn't come out often enough. Why not put an issue out each month? And have Lieut. Scott Morgan write more stories in them. **CAPTAIN DANGER'S BLITZKRIEG** was the best novel I have ever read, so let's have more. We should have more writers like Morgan.

I am indeed sorry to hear of Captain Ken Collings' death. Joe, why not have a memorial of him in your next issue? I am not much of a writer and that's why I haven't written before. So please excuse me.

Ken Collings was a good friend of ours, Nanny. We used to have long talks with Ken at a writers' luncheon some time back. But Ken went out the way he wanted to go. Living life right up to the hilt and we will bet we know what he said about Hitler before the curtain dropped. Lt. Morgan wants us to thank you for the plug, Nanny.

We must get on as it is getting late. Another reason is that Jim Fox of 1520 Prospect Rd., Ashtabula, Ohio, tells us he saw a gal named Yvette. Thanks for the tip, Jimmy. Tell us what is on your mind while I pick up my dispatch case and prepare to duck.

[Turn page]



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This is the first letter I have written your club but it won't be the last. First, I ought to tell you that I think you (and nobody else) are the best writer, ever to dip a goose quill in ink. How about a couple of your drawings and your picture in full dress uniform (or without as the moths have probably got it by now). Thank you!

Tell Herman Beep that I have an opening for him in our local jail. Also watch out for Yvette as she is back in New York and she swears to get you.

I'm not trying to get fresh but I think "Hot Air Warriors" is a good name for your club. Please put me in pen pals. I am 14 and like aviation, sailing and other sports.

There, scoffers! Jimmy Fox is a good judge of literary talent. Say, Jim, was Yvette with her sister? How did those two smooches get out of France anyway as I thought the Nazi beach patrol was on the job? Well, knowing those two Frogettes like I do, no Gestapo could get ahead of them.

Thanks for tipping me off, Jimmy. I will tell Herman Beep you asked for him.

We know you will get a laugh out of this letter from Sam Berland, 6319 Glenwood, Chicago, Ill. Sam hates mush in his Merlins. He'll tell you!

In my humble opinion the last Captain Danger was the best ever. Tell Lt. Morgan to write some more stories of Danger and his commandos. Two things you can do that will help out the mag a lot.

First, have at least one World War I story. Then, cut out mush. It makes me sick to read such drivel as "Charley saw six MEs on his tail but he couldn't think straight. He was thinking of June, yes June, with the golden hair and blue eyes!" Boh!

Cut that out and you'll have a very fine magazine. One thing that ruins a good mag is a love sick dame. Also see if you have any picture of yourself. I know it's better than Powell, Taylor and Gable put together, and send it to me. Have more stories about Marine flyers. When I get out of High School in a year I'm going to join the Marines.

Line up, girls, and take a shot at Sam. Sam makes no bones about the fact that pilots should not be thinking of cupcakes when they mix with the Messes. Sam is going to join the Marines but we never saw a Marine who would not admire a female citizen who chanced to pass by within a mile of him. But you're young, Sammy. You will learn. Nice try, Sam. Give again.

We are very sorry to have to chase

SMASHING ACTION IN

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DEDICATED TO OUR FIGHTING PILOTS

Only 10¢ Everywhere

Frogeyes with the mail sack but we happen to be loaded up with important appointments for this evening.

We are called upon to do everything to keep civilian morale where it belongs. Only yesterday we were told to spot a business man out in Mamaroneck who had a sign out over his place of business that said he would rather have a hundred Jap customers than one American. We found out that the guy was okay as he ran an undertaking shop. That is the trouble with rumors and they should be held to a minimum. . . .

Oh, here is Herman Beep again. What is the matter now, Beep? You went to Washington and enlisted? They wouldn't take you? Why? You couldn't stand the marching, huh? So you had to walk all the way back from Washington again?

Here's a Good Idea!

We believe that all of the club members and their friends, who write in should mention the things they are doing to help win the war. How many war bonds or stamps do you own? How much waste paper have you baled up to give to the government? How about scrap metal and other vital waste products that can be reclaimed? What is your part in civilian defense?

Hand me my brief case, Frogeyes, and see that this place is policed up and the blackout curtains put where we can get to them quickly. We can be reached at the control center out in Rye in case the hangar is bombed. If a woman answers—hang up—I mean, that is a volunteer on the incoming phone and she will give me the message.

Happy landings!

—JOE ARCHIBALD.

What do you think of AIR WAR? Please address your letters and post cards of comment and criticism to The Editor, AIR WAR, 10 East 40th St., New York, N. Y. Thank you!

NOTICE

We still have available several hundred sets of sepia portraits of famous World War aces. Each set contains twelve portraits and is well worth owning. To get your set, send a name strip from the cover of this magazine, plus 15c in stamps or coin to defray mailing and handling costs. OR, if you send name strips from the covers of any three of the following four magazines—THE AMERICAN, EAGLE, SKY FIGHTERS, R.A.F. ACES, AIR WAR—you need only enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope.

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Off the Runway

AVIATION NEWS AND NOTES

THE versatility of modern aircraft is graphically illustrated by a new flying office recently delivered to Brazil. Built on the order of the Brazilian Minister of Aeronautics, with permission of the United States Government, the ship is a Lockheed Lodestar, equipped with an office desk, swivel chair, davenport and other office furniture.

It will be used by President Vargas and his staff to conduct business while flying across Brazil.



MOST of us have heard of the Spitfire Funds in Great Britain, and not so long ago there was a drive in the United States to buy a bomber for Bataan. This is an idea which ought to catch on from here to Honolulu.

Citizens of one community in which an aircraft plant is located staged a "Stampede for Battle Bonds," to raise sufficient funds to purchase two training planes manufactured in their city. The drive far surpassed the original goal.



A GIANT, four-motored troop transport, capable of carrying at least 42 fully armed and equipped men across the ocean, represents commercial aviation's latest contribution to this country's war effort. The huge plane, built by Douglas and called the C-54, is the natural outgrowth of the company's earlier four-engined experimental transport, the DC-4, which was built five years ago. The DC-4 was designed to carry a gross load of 52,000 pounds more than 2,500 miles at 265 miles per hour.

What does the C-54 do? Well, brother, it's one of those Military Secrets, but the boys in the know agree that it will carry a greater load, higher, faster and farther! That's enough for us right now.



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fliers must use oxygen. But what some of you may not know is that in the past these tanks often exploded when struck by a bullet, hurling jagged bits of metal through the cabin.

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IF you've been wondering about what happens to your old rubber, toothpaste tubes and old paper, a few facts may be of interest to you. Airplanes require from 33 to 96 pounds of rubber for tires, with an additional 24 to 55 pounds for inner tubes, and the pneumatic life rafts carried in planes for emergency water landings contain 29 pounds of rubber.

Sixty used toothpaste tubes contain enough tin to solder all the electrical connections in a medium sized bomber. It takes 6,000 pounds of rag content bond paper to make enough blueprint paper to draw the plans for one pursuit ship.

So watch that salvage, and Keep 'Em Flying!

REMEMBER THE REUBEN JAMES, TOO! (Continued from page 93)

bursts were no more than clipping the Messerschmitt's wingtips.

He slammed the PBY over and around in a violent maneuver that made the craft tremble and shudder like a surface vessel plowing into heavy seas. And then he pulled it out so that both he and Higby had a point-blank target.

The Messerschmitt pilot realized that, too, and he tried desperately to swerve off to the side and into the clear. But Becker's guns, and Higby's guns, were going all out by then, and the pilot of the jet-black 110 with its blue nose might just as well have tried to dart into a hole in the sky and pull it in after him.

The plane took every one of those bullets, and they were much, much more than enough.

It was like an invisible buzz-saw
[Turn page]

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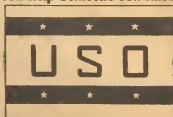
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ripping through the wings and fuselage. The Messerschmitt simply flew apart in sections. Then the tanks let go and that spot of sky was blotted out by livid flame and great gobs of smoke. It all seemed to hang there in the air, but Becker didn't give it a second look. He close-hauled the flying boat around, and instantly snapped his gaze down at the U-boat. It was half a mile away, still on the surface, and still making headway.

His heart zoomed hard against his back teeth as he flew at full throttle toward the undersea boat. But it was only the matter of split seconds before he saw that the picture on deck was still the same. The crew members were still flat on their faces. The commander was still on his knees with his hands in the air. And Ensign Casey was right behind him with the sub-machine-gun all set to spill the Nazi's brains all over the deck.

BECKER stared, and closed his eyes and gave his head a sharp shake. That didn't change anything. The picture remained. The U-boat stayed up on the surface and running westward. The bow didn't go down an inch, even, although conning-tower hatch had been closed by a member of the crew who was still inside the hull.

"If they dive, I've got to give Higby the word," Becker whispered hoarsely. "Casey would want it that way. They're under way and he's still standing there. If they dive—sacrifice those on deck—"

He let the rest trail off. His brain was too on fire with thoughts to give intelligible expression to any one. It was like a mad dream; a fantastic mirage that would not go away. Then suddenly he caught black smoke out the corner of his eye, down on the water to the west. He looked and saw two American destroyers practically flying through the water. Like a man in a trance he watched them swing wide, then cut in to pull alongside the U-boat that had lost headway and was simply riding low in the swells. Then

Higby's voice crackled against his ear-drums.

"Let's land and take Casey aboard!" the co-pilot was shouting. "A free ride on a destroyer isn't fun for anybody. Besides, he belongs to us!"

Twenty minutes later the Catalina was winging back toward Reykjavik. Ensign Casey sat in the co-pilot's seat grinning as usual, and very pleased with the whole world.

"Sorry, I got tough," he said to Becker. "We were in a jam, though, and I figured I could do something. And it was a cinch. I simply told that lug what I'd do with his brains if he got funny. And he knew I wasn't kidding. That's about how it was."

"Where did you learn to speak German?" Becker asked.

"No place," Casey replied. "I don't know a word of their lingo. But he spoke English. They'd surfaced for minor repairs, and we caught them just as they were getting through. So I told him to order the bums who were still below decks to head her west. We'd reach the destroyers sooner, you see?"

Becker gulped and stared at the man. "He could just as easily have ordered those below to crash-dive and float you all off!"

Ensign Casey snorted and curled down a corner of his mouth.

"He was a Nazi, Mr. Becker," he said. "And when you see a guy cash in his chips to save the necks of a lot of lesser ratings, you just ain't looking at a Nazi!"

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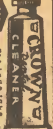
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